



QAA

Degree awarding powers

Handbook for applicants

February 2014

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Introduction

1 The right to award UK degrees is a highly prized and legally protected privilege. This handbook explains the application and scrutiny process for degree awarding powers, and QAA's role in it. It covers specifically the operational aspects of the process for which QAA is responsible. The policy and criteria are owned by the Government.

2 QAA's mission is to safeguard standards and improve the quality of higher education, and the scrutiny of degree awarding powers applications is one of QAA's most important responsibilities. In making our recommendations, we are mindful of the need to uphold the worldwide reputation of UK higher education and the good standing of UK tertiary qualifications.

3 This handbook has been designed with the aim of making the process as clear as possible. Please note that throughout the handbook 'we' refers to QAA (including the Advisory Committee and the QAA Board) and 'you' refers to the applicant seeking degree awarding powers.

4 The handbook covers the following variants of degree awarding powers:

- Foundation Degree awarding powers (FDAP) - (for which only further education institutions in England and Wales may apply)
- taught degree awarding powers (TDAP)
- research degree awarding powers (RDAP).

It does not cover university title, which is the subject of [separate guidance](#).¹

¹ www.qaa.ac.uk/AboutUs/DAP/guidance/Pages/UT-guidance-criteria.aspx.

Legislative context

5 In order to be able to award a recognised higher education degree in the UK, a higher education provider must be authorised to do so by virtue of a Royal Charter, or by an Act of Parliament, or by the Privy Council. The relevant legislation for taught and research degrees is Section 76 of *the Further and Higher Education Act 1992*² (FHEA 1992) and Section 48 of *the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992*³, which empower the Privy Council to specify institutions as competent to grant awards, in other words, to award their own degrees. Since 1999 the Government has drawn on advice from QAA in making its recommendations to the Privy Council.

6 The relevant legislation for Foundation Degrees is [Section 19](#) of *the Further Education and Training Act 2007*⁴ which amends Section 76 of the FHEA 1992 to enable the Privy Council to make Orders specifying institutions in England within the further education sector as competent to grant Foundation Degrees. [Section 259](#) of the *Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009*⁵ further amends section 76 of the FHEA 1992 to enable the Privy Council to make Orders specifying institutions in Wales within the further education sector as competent to grant Foundation Degrees. These further education institutions are those bodies incorporated under Section 15 or 16 of the FHEA 1992 or designated under Section 28 of that Act.

Government Guidance and criteria

7 The application process begins and ends with the Privy Council which is responsible, under the FHEA 1992, for approving an institution as competent to grant degrees. Ministers with territorial responsibility in the four nations of the UK maintain the Guidance and criteria (the Guidance) against which applications are considered. Consequently, the Privy Council seeks advice from the relevant minister who in turn seeks QAA's advice.

8 The Guidance sets out any prerequisites to be met before an application can be made, in addition to any supplementary information to be provided at the time of application. It also includes the criteria, explanations and evidence requirements to be satisfied. Different sets of Guidance are applicable, depending upon the type of degree awarding powers sought and the nation (England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland) of the applicant organisation. Details are given below.

Taught and research degree awarding powers

9 For **England and Wales**, applications for the grant of and RDAP are considered in accordance with the [2004 Guidance: Applications for the grant of taught degree awarding powers, research degree awarding powers and university title: Guidance and criteria for applicant institutions in England and Wales](#) (August 2004).⁶ The criteria focus on:

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/13/section/76.

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/37/section/48.

⁴ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/25/section/19.

⁵ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/22/section/259.

⁶ www.gov.uk/government/publications/applying-for-powers-to-award-taught-degrees-research-degrees-and-university-title.

- governance and academic management
- academic standards and quality assurance
- scholarship and the pedagogical effectiveness of staff
- the environment supporting the delivery of taught higher education programmes.

10 Under the 2004 **Guidance**, applicant organisations seeking RDAP following the successful grant of TDAP are expected to provide evidence that they continue to satisfy the criteria governing the grant of TDAP, and that they are exercising appropriate stewardship of those powers.

11 The additional criteria for RDAP focus on:

- staff capacity and expertise to supervise and teach at doctoral level
- satisfaction of relevant national guidance relating to the award of research degrees
- the number of Doctor of Philosophy conferments (which should be greater than 30), made through a partnership arrangement with an existing degree-awarding body.

12 For **Scotland and Northern Ireland**, applications are considered under the October [1999 Guidance](#): *Applications for the grant of taught degree awarding powers, research degree awarding powers and university title*⁷ (which was, before 2004, applicable to all of the UK). In relation to TDAP, the 1999 Guidance focuses on:

- governance and management
- quality assurance
- administrative systems
- academic staffing.

13 For the purposes of RDAP under the **1999 Guidance**, additional criteria need to be satisfied with regard to the environment supporting the award of higher degrees and academic staffing.

Foundation Degree awarding powers

14 Applications for the grant of FDAP are considered in accordance with the [2010 Guidance](#): *Applications for the Grant of Foundation Degree awarding powers: Guidance and criteria for applicant further education institutions in England and Wales (October 2010)*.⁸ In addition to the 2010 Guidance, there is an associated [companion guide](#)⁹ and a series of [frequently asked questions](#).¹⁰

15 The criteria for FDAP, which apply to **England and Wales**, focus on:

- governance and academic management
- academic standards and quality assurance
- scholarship and the pedagogical effectiveness of staff
- the environment supporting the delivery of FDAP.

⁷ www.qaa.ac.uk/AboutUs/DAP/guidance/Pages/guidance-criteria.aspx.

⁸ www.gov.uk/government/publications/applying-for-foundation-degree-awarding-powers.

⁹ www.gov.uk/government/publications/applying-for-foundation-degree-awarding-powers-companion-guide.

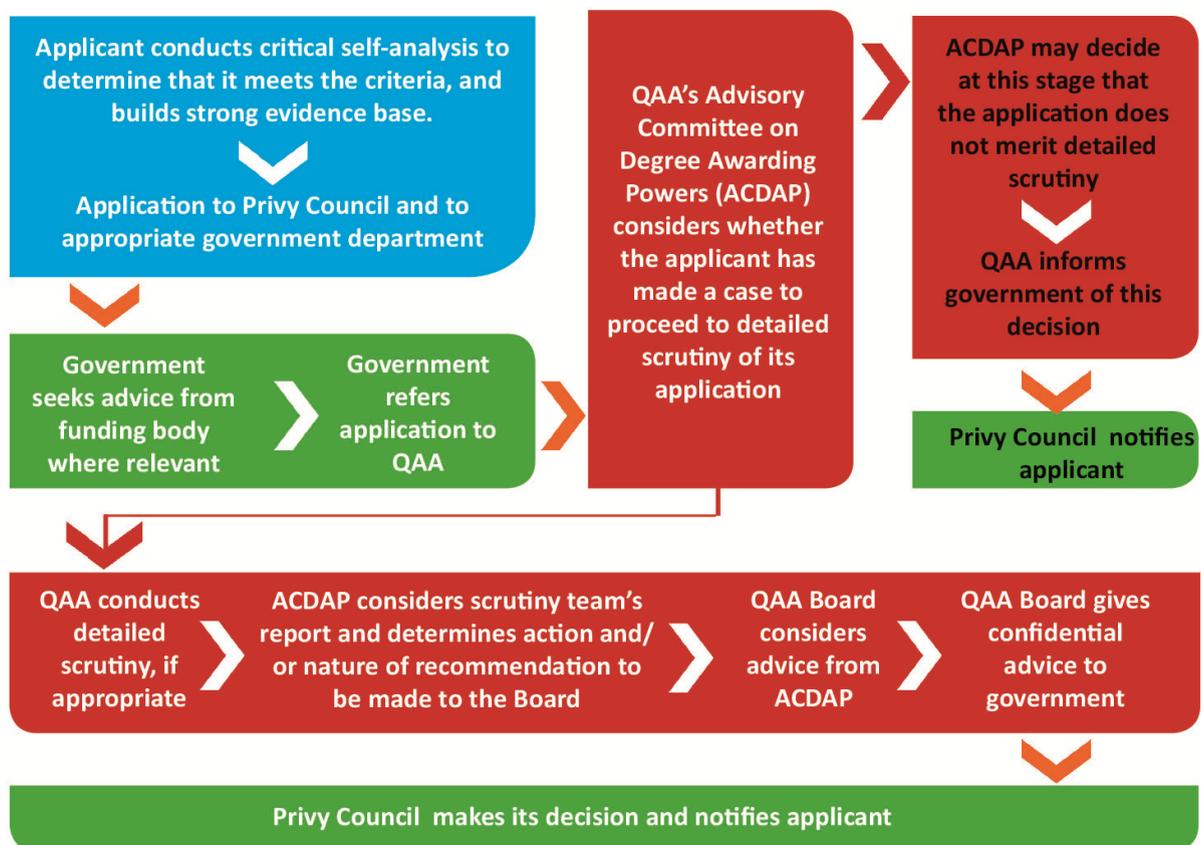
¹⁰ www.gov.uk/government/publications/foundation-degree-awarding-powers-frequently-asked-questions.

16 An FDAP scrutiny includes visits to work-based learning sites to demonstrate how an applicant seeks to guarantee the quality and standards of its off-site Foundation Degree provision. See [Annex 6](#) of this document for further details.

17 In January 2013 QAA published guidance on the TDAP process for further education colleges previously granted FDAP. See [links](#) as before.

An overview of the process

18 The diagram below shows the main stages of the application and scrutiny process. For more details, see the chapter on the [detailed scrutiny](#) stage.



Application for degree awarding powers
Blue = actions by applicant Green = actions by government Red = actions by QAA

19 As an applicant, you should be aware that QAA's scrutiny of degree awarding powers applications is essentially an assessment of whether you meet the relevant criteria and evidence requirements, as claimed in your critical self-analysis (CSA). It is not designed as a developmental activity and should not be viewed as such.

20 Further information about the process can be found on [our website](#).¹¹ Contact details are provided in [Annex 1](#).

¹¹ www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/dap

QAA's role

21 QAA's mission is to safeguard standards and improve the quality of UK higher education (see [Annex 2](#)). Our remit in relation to degree awarding powers applications is to offer advice in confidence, through the appropriate minister, to the Privy Council. The scrutiny of degree awarding powers applications is one of our most important responsibilities since, in making these recommendations, in each case we are helping to redefine the UK higher education sector.

22 In offering our advice to Government, we take account of the Guidance detailing the criteria and evidence requirements for the different levels of degree awarding powers set out above. Our work is also informed by the Expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) which has been drawn up in consultation with UK higher education providers, and is applicable to all such providers, whether or not they have degree awarding powers.

23 Applications are treated in confidence and QAA's work in this area is overseen by an [Advisory Committee on Degree Awarding Powers \(ACDAP\)](#), a subcommittee of the QAA Board (to which it reports). The Board determines the nature of the advice to be given to the relevant minister following ACDAP's consideration of the findings of a detailed scrutiny of an application. QAA's advice to government has recommendation status only.

24 Our recommendations are based on close and careful consideration of each application. We are conscious that our scrutiny procedures and recommendations must be fully secure, evidence-based and consistently applied. This is also in the interests of applicants, as the grant of powers following only a superficial scrutiny would give rise to speculation, both inside and outside the UK, about the standards of the organisation concerned (and, by extension, of the standards of UK higher education as a whole).

The application

25 As a prospective applicant, you are strongly advised to approach QAA for informal discussions at an early stage and before you make a formal application. Such discussions will help to ensure that you have a clear understanding of:

- the relevant Guidance, the evidence requirements, and any prerequisites relevant to the powers you seek
- the importance of a robust evidence base to inform and support your application
- the scrutiny process
- the obligations placed on a body holding UK degree awarding powers.

26 The initial discussion should help you to make an informed decision about the likely timing of any future application, should you decide to proceed. Before submitting an application, you should consider carefully what internal resources will be needed during the preparation and subsequent consideration of your application.

27 Although it is not a requirement, it may be helpful to establish an external advisory group to provide advice and guidance on organisational development, both as part of the application process and subsequent to it. In this context, you should bear in mind the important contribution that can be made by representatives from your degree-validating partners or other external bodies. You should also be aware that, in the interests of obtaining a full and frank appraisal of your capacity to discharge the significant responsibilities associated with the powers you seek, QAA will contact the head of the degree-awarding body or bodies with whom you are in partnership for comment on the nature and efficacy of the collaborative relationship that has been established with you.

Documentary requirements

28 In making an application, the onus is on you to present your case for degree awarding powers. Your formal application should take the form of a CSA in which you demonstrate the existence of a 'well-founded, cohesive and self-critical academic community that demonstrates firm guardianship of its standards in operation'. It is for you to determine how you wish to structure your CSA, but you should bear in mind the need to make close reference to the government Guidance, and to provide evidence to support your case. The CSA should describe, analyse and comment clearly and frankly on your ability to meet the criteria associated with the powers you seek. It should include clear references to the evidence that supports your claims. The evidence should be listed in your application. QAA will require 25 printed copies of the CSA.

29 Purely as a guide, an effective CSA is likely to be approximately 60 pages in length, although there is no penalty for longer or shorter submissions.

30 The CSA, and the evidence on which it is based, should also be uploaded to the QAA SharePoint folder allocated to your application. In addition, you will need to complete the relevant templates for the powers you are seeking, as detailed in the following lists. You should contact enquiries@dap.qaa.ac.uk to request these, and upload the completed documents with the CSA at the time of your application.

Templates for Foundation Degree awarding powers

31 The templates for FDAP are:

- evidence mapping template (indicating where in the CSA and in the uploaded evidence you address the criteria and evidence requirements) ([Annex 3](#))
- staffing template ([Annex 4](#))
- applicant profile ([Annex 5](#)).

Templates for taught degree awarding powers

32 The templates for TDAP are:

- evidence mapping template (indicating where in the CSA and in the uploaded evidence you address the criteria and evidence requirements) ([Annex 7](#))
- staffing template ([Annex 8](#))
- applicant profile ([Annex 9](#))

Template for research degree awarding powers

33 The templates for RDAP are:

- evidence mapping template (indicating where in the CSA and in the uploaded evidence you address the criteria and evidence requirements) ([Annex 10](#))
- data tables ([Annex 11](#)).

34 In addition, you should upload a copy of your academic calendar, setting out the dates and times of board and committee meetings, including governing body and subcommittee meetings, and key academic decision-making meetings. If the calendar does not cover other major activity (for example, validation and review events, away-day meetings and assessment boards) this information should be provided under separate cover.

35 If ACDAP agrees that a prima facie case has been made to proceed, the claims you make in your application, and the quantitative and qualitative evidence on which your CSA is based, will be subject to detailed scrutiny by a scrutiny team including senior members of the academic community, who will report their findings to ACDAP.

Submitting your application

36 One copy of the application should be addressed to the Privy Council and one to the government department responsible for higher education in your nation of the UK (see Contacts in [Annex 1](#)). You may also submit the 25 copies of your CSA that will be required by QAA at the same time, though we will only consider this documentation once we have received a formal request from government to do so.

Timing of your application

37 The application and any additional information stipulated in the relevant Guidance, prefaced by a formal letter of application from the Chair of your governing body, should be submitted to the Privy Council at least five weeks before the ACDAP meeting at which you expect your application to be considered. Dates of ACDAP meetings are published on

[our website](#).¹²

38 QAA needs to have received any request for advice from government, 25 copies of your application, and payment in respect of the application fee at least three weeks before the ACDAP meeting at which the application is to be considered.¹³ Once we receive the formal request from government, your application will be considered at the next meeting of ACDAP.

Costs

39 The fees charged for scrutiny activity by QAA reflect the need for us to ensure that there is no cross-subsidy from other sources of QAA funding. We have recently reviewed the fees and new charges will come into effect for the 2013-14 academic year.

40 QAA will charge an application fee of £2,500, which should be received by us at the time of application in the form of a cheque. If an invoice is required in advance, or you wish to make the payment via BACS, please contact our [Head office](#), who will direct you to our Finance department.

41 If the ACDAP decides that a small team (normally two team members and a QAA Officer) should undertake an exploratory visit and report back to the Committee (for example, where we hold little information about you, or if your application raises specific matters to be addressed), a charge of £5,000 will be made in advance of the visit.

42 Once ACDAP has agreed to proceed to a detailed scrutiny of an application, detailed scrutiny fees are payable. Details of the fees are as follows and available on [our website](#).¹⁴

	2013-14	
	Fee for non-subscribers	Fee for subscribers (minimum of two years' standing)
FDAP	£60,000	£40,000
TDAP	£60,000	£40,000
RDAP	n/a	£28,000

43 Scrutiny fees cover costs incurred up to, and including, a scrutiny team final report to ACDAP.

44 If an ACDAP sub-panel visit, or other form of follow-up visit is required, a further charge of £2,000 will be made.

45 Should any substantial additional expenditure be incurred as part of a detailed scrutiny, a further charge may be made to ensure costs are recovered. Since the amount of the further work required may vary between applications, any additional charges will be set individually for payment at the end of the process. Advance notification of any such charge will be given.

¹² [www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/dap/acdap/pages/advisory-committee-on-degree-awarding-powers-\(acdap\).aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/dap/acdap/pages/advisory-committee-on-degree-awarding-powers-(acdap).aspx).

¹³ [www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/dap/acdap/pages/advisory-committee-on-degree-awarding-powers-\(acdap\).aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/dap/acdap/pages/advisory-committee-on-degree-awarding-powers-(acdap).aspx).

¹⁴ www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/dap/fees/pages/current-fee-structure-degree-awarding-powers-and-university-title-applications.aspx.

Roles and responsibilities

46 This section explains the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the application and scrutiny processes for degree awarding powers.

The Advisory Committee on Degree Awarding Powers

47 QAA's recommendations have a significant impact for applicant organisations and the UK higher education sector in general. Recognising this, ACDAP has responsibility for overseeing the degree awarding powers criteria and associated scrutiny processes, making periodic recommendations on their development to our Board. ACDAP's terms of reference and membership are published on [our website](#).¹⁵

48 ACDAP's core responsibilities are to:

- consider applications for degree awarding powers to establish whether there is sufficient information to proceed to detailed scrutiny of the evidence submitted in support of the application
- discuss further reports on applications at various subsequent stages of scrutiny
- make recommendations to our Board on individual applications.

49 ACDAP receives correspondence from an applicant's degree-validating partners and is also advised of any QAA audit/review track record information.

50 If ACDAP decides that your application should proceed to the detailed scrutiny stage, we establish a team to consider it in detail, together with the evidence on which you have relied to inform your CSA. We will let you know who will be coordinating your scrutiny on behalf of QAA and who will be on the scrutiny team as soon as possible following ACDAP's decision to proceed.

51 If ACDAP decides that you have not made a sufficiently strong case to proceed to the detailed scrutiny stage, we advise the relevant government department of this outcome and the department concerned will advise the Privy Council. The Privy Council will notify you of the final outcome.

The Coordinating Officer

52 We will identify a QAA officer to manage and coordinate the detailed scrutiny process once ACDAP has agreed to proceed to this stage. The officer will:

- visit you for a preliminary meeting to ensure that you are clear about what to expect and what we expect of you in return
- ensure that scrutiny team members are briefed about requirements, protocols and their obligations and responsibilities
- agree the schedule of engagements to be undertaken
- coordinate the work of the scrutiny team
- provide progress reports to ACDAP
- oversee the production of the scrutiny team's final report to ACDAP.

¹⁵ [www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/dap/acdap/pages/advisory-committee-on-degree-awarding-powers-\(acdap\).aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/dap/acdap/pages/advisory-committee-on-degree-awarding-powers-(acdap).aspx).

53 All visits undertaken in the course of the detailed scrutiny must be arranged through the Coordinating Officer who will also let you know of any additional information requested by the scrutiny team.

The scrutiny team

54 The QAA-appointed scrutiny team considers the detail of your application against the relevant criteria contained within the Guidance. This involves:

- examining documentary evidence
- conducting on-site observations of meetings and events having a bearing on your application
- meeting students, staff, governors and other stakeholders
- visiting employers where appropriate (for example, for FDAP or where there is a significant element of work-based learning).

55 Scrutiny team members may undertake visits both as a team and individually. The evidence obtained through the team's activities and interactions with you will inform their final report. The scrutiny team itself does not make a recommendation on your application; this is a matter for ACDAP.

56 For parts of the detailed scrutiny, the team receives administrative support from a scrutiny secretary, who takes notes of meetings and keeps a rolling record of team members' interactions with you. The secretary is also familiar with the Guidance and contributes to the planning of scrutiny activities and the preparation of the team's final report.

57 Scrutiny team members are normally drawn from, or have first-hand experience of, existing universities or other degree-awarding bodies. They typically also have experience of different types of QAA review work. We seek to ensure that there is an appropriate balance of suitably senior, and experienced, team members; where possible, we aim to include individuals who have previously been part of a QAA review team at your organisation. Normally, there are:

- four members for FDAP
- four members for TDAP
- three members for RDAP.

(including a scrutiny secretary in each case).

58 Team members are expected to:

- be courteous and friendly in their dealings with you at all times, respecting organisational sensitivities and practices
- respect the confidentiality of the scrutiny process at all times
- base the views they form on clear and demonstrable evidence.

59 Team members cannot accept any gifts or invitations to formal events (such as dinners or award ceremonies) and no member of a scrutiny team should engage in consultancy with you in the course of the scrutiny process.

All communications (written or oral) connected with a scrutiny are treated as confidential to the team and QAA. Written communications are made through QAA's SharePoint facility, Qmmunity.

The detailed scrutiny stage

60 Degree awarding powers scrutiny activity is intended to:

- establish whether an applicant meets the criteria for the powers it seeks
- enable QAA to make informed judgements about an applicant's ability and sustained capacity to assume the powers it seeks
- ensure that there can be public confidence in any powers granted as a result of our recommendations.

61 Responsibility for the quality of higher education and its assurance can only effectively lie where the power exists to manage or change practice. The standard of an award, and the means by which it is assured, are ultimately responsibilities of the degree-awarding body concerned. In considering an application and gauging the extent to which there can be public confidence in an applicant's capacity to set and maintain academic standards, QAA will be actively seeking manifestations of a 'well-founded, cohesive and self-critical academic community that can demonstrate firm guardianship of its standards'. To that end, you can expect us to focus on the internal procedures you have established for setting appropriate standards and for assuring and enhancing the quality of your degree programmes, including design, approval, monitoring and review mechanisms, and the assessment of students. We will also be interested in the relationship between corporate and academic decision-making. In addition, we will wish to know about the qualifications and experience of your staff, and how you satisfy yourself that they are enabled to help students achieve the required academic standards, and experience meaningful and worthwhile learning opportunities within a supportive environment.

62 QAA will be seeking evidence demonstrating that your organisation has the capacity, self-criticality and organisational maturity to be granted and consistently exercise the powers you seek. We will need to be satisfied that you understand and 'own' the significant responsibilities and obligations that would be placed on you in the event of degree awarding powers being granted, including your contribution to the collective security of the UK degree brand in a global environment. The onus is on you to clearly demonstrate that there can be public confidence, both present and future, in the systems and supporting infrastructure you have in place to assure the quality and standards of degrees to be awarded in your name. Experience suggests that time spent in careful and demonstrable preparation for degree awarding powers is time well spent.

Duration

63 The detailed scrutiny process is both extensive and intensive. As it is not mechanistic, its precise nature and length is likely to vary, depending on such factors as your higher education track record, the robustness of your CSA and supporting evidence, and the powers sought. In non-problematic cases, a detailed scrutiny of an FDAP or TDAP application might be expected to extend over a full academic year, while a detailed scrutiny of an RDAP application might involve six months of scrutiny activity. Allowing for time spent on the production of the final report and its subsequent consideration by ACDAP and the QAA Board, you should work on the basis that the scrutiny of a degree awarding powers application is likely to extend over a period of 12 to 18 months from your application to the

Privy Council's final decision.

Scope

64 A degree awarding powers scrutiny typically involves a series of visits to your organisation, and other learning environments that you use, such as work-based settings, as appropriate. These visits may be undertaken by the scrutiny team as a whole or by individual members of the team. The scrutiny secretary will keep a record of all substantive discussions involving the team as a whole and will disseminate these to the team.

65 All visits have a clear and identified purpose as advised by the Coordinating Officer. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, you should normally be given at least one week's notice prior to a visit from a scrutiny team member.

66 The team's time will be spent on the following main activities:

- reading and evaluating the CSA and evidence you provide, which would typically include:
 - minutes, agendas and papers for internal meetings including those of the governing body (or equivalent) and its subcommittees
 - minutes, agendas, papers and reports relating to other internal committee meetings including assessment boards and validation/review panels
 - papers relating to any other activities having a bearing on the application
- structured discussions with a range of your stakeholders, including:
 - governing body members
 - academic managers
 - staff
 - students
 - validating body representatives
 - external examiners
- visits to sites of work-based learning and meetings with employers, as appropriate
- observing meetings and other activities identified by the team, including:
 - governing body meetings
 - internal committee meetings
 - validation/review events
 - examination boards
 - any other activities pertinent to the application
- team discussions as the scrutiny progresses.

67 Meetings with individuals and informal conversations with staff or students, while perfectly acceptable, must be formally recorded by scrutiny team members if the information is subsequently to be used as part of the scrutiny process. Team members will exercise discretion and judgement in deciding whether to use information gathered on an informal basis. They do not engage in discussion which might compromise the validity and independence of subsequent judgements.

68 Before a scrutiny team member attends a formal committee meeting or similar, you may wish to offer to provide a short preparatory briefing relating to the session to be observed. Where practicable, team members will take notes as appropriate. A scrutiny team member remains silent during the observation of a formal committee meeting, or similar.

69 Scrutiny teams are required to balance the value of workplace evidence against the time available and the need to minimise inconvenience to employers. Where scrutiny activity includes visits to work-based learning sites you are responsible for briefing employers in preparation for such visits.

70 Scrutiny team members may request additional documentation from you during their visits. Any such documentation should be uploaded to the QAA SharePoint folder set up for the scrutiny of your application.

71 Team members do not provide feedback to you following their observations or meetings with groups/individuals, and you should therefore ensure all parties involved in a scrutiny are aware of this. They are required, however, to produce an individual observation/meeting report using a QAA report template to be returned to QAA electronically via the scrutiny SharePoint folder **within 10 working days** of a visit. Comments made by individuals in discussion sessions are not attributed. These report forms are confidential between the scrutiny team and QAA, and are not made available to any other party.

72 The scrutiny team's schedule of engagements will reflect the need for the team to submit a report on its findings to ACDAP to enable that committee to come to an informed view about your case for degree awarding powers, taking due account of the relevant Guidance. You should therefore expect the team to give detailed consideration to your application and supporting evidence.

Scrutiny schedule

Preliminary visit by the Coordinating Officer

73 The Coordinating Officer responsible for managing the detailed scrutiny of your application will contact you at an early opportunity to arrange a preliminary visit in preparation for the detailed scrutiny. The preliminary visit would normally take place within eight weeks of ACDAP's decision to proceed to the detailed scrutiny stage and is intended to provide an opportunity for the Coordinating Officer to:

- establish contact with relevant and key personnel within your organisation
- discuss the scrutiny process in more detail, including operational considerations
- clarify any matters relating to the scrutiny process or the relevant guidance more generally.

74 Typically, the preliminary visit will include discussion of:

- the nature and anticipated duration of the detailed scrutiny
- the evidence available in support of the application
- relevant meetings and events taking place in the course of the scrutiny period
- the arrangements for meetings with employers and visits to sites where work-based learning is taking place
- your policy on the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults (if your provision includes students within these categories) and the implications of such a policy for the scrutiny team's on-site and work-based learning visits
- operational considerations
- who you wish to nominate as the contact for scrutiny-related matters (including acting as a point of contact for visits undertaken by scrutiny team members individually and collectively)

- the arrangements for evaluating the scrutiny process.

Scrutiny team planning meeting

75 Following their appointment to a scrutiny team, members are expected to read the CSA and the evidence you have used in support of your application, to familiarise themselves with your organisation. The Coordinating Officer and the scrutiny team will hold a planning meeting when the team will:

- review and consider the application and supporting information provided
- share members' understanding of the organisational context
- consider members' responses to the documentation provided
- discuss the means by which the team might secure the necessary evidence to inform its final report to ACDAP
- agree a schedule of engagements, including visits to sites of work-based learning where appropriate, to be updated as the detailed scrutiny progresses
- agree a programme of meetings for the initial team visit to your organisation over one or two days
- agree the indicative agenda to be followed at each of the series of meetings held during the initial visit
- if appropriate, consider action that might be required in light of your organisation's policy on the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults with regard to on-site and work-based learning visits to be undertaken (for example, Criminal Records Bureau checks)
- agree which team member will be responsible for leading on particular aspects of the scrutiny and for the corresponding sections of the scrutiny team's final report to be presented to ACDAP.

76 Members will be briefed about recent developments in relation to degree awarding powers; the provider context; and relevant reference material, templates and communication mechanisms that have been developed to enable them to carry out their roles with consistency and confidence.

77 Following the planning meeting, the Coordinating Officer will send you a proposed schedule of initial engagements so that you can plan accordingly. Should there be any changes to the timing or date of any engagements to which team members have committed themselves, you should let the Coordinating Officer know at an early opportunity.

The initial scrutiny team visit

78 The initial scrutiny team visit (one to two days) will normally be held once the scrutiny team has had an opportunity to consider the application and supporting evidence in detail. The visit provides an opportunity for the team to meet a representative cross-section of your organisation to help place the application in context. The team will determine who it would wish to meet at the initial visit, for example:

- governing body members
- the head or principal of your organisation
- members of the senior management team
- academic managers
- teaching staff/research supervisors (as appropriate)
- administrative staff

- students and alumni
- representatives from degree-awarding bodies with whom you have, or have had, a collaborative relationship
- employers and other external stakeholders.

79 The scrutiny secretary will join the team for this visit and will keep a record of the meetings.

Further visits and reporting

80 Team members are required to complete a report after each organisational engagement they undertake. These individual reports are shared with other members of the team and help to inform the developing schedule of organisational engagements as the detailed scrutiny progresses. They have a key part to play in informing and supporting the scrutiny team's findings to be presented in the team's final report to ACDAP. These individual reports should enable scrutiny teams to gather information about the extent to which the relevant criteria are met and to identify any outstanding issues that need to be resolved. They are confidential to scrutiny teams, and to those members of ACDAP and the QAA Board receiving final reports.

81 The scrutiny team meets at key stages in the scrutiny process (for example, after one term or semester):

- to review progress
- to establish where gaps in the team's knowledge base remain
- to agree the next steps.

82 Each scrutiny is monitored by way of progress reports submitted to scheduled meetings of ACDAP.

83 Given QAA's responsibility to provide confidential advice to ministers, the detailed scrutiny process has important differences from other QAA review activities to which you may have been subject and places some constraints on the nature of the interaction that it is possible for QAA to have with applicants. However, in the interests of maintaining an effective and constructive dialogue with organisations, a detailed scrutiny includes provision for meetings between the Coordinating Officer and organisational representatives to discuss progress and identify any matters where further evidence is required. Typically, such meetings would follow the scrutiny team's progress review meetings/discussions.

84 At the end of the detailed scrutiny, the scrutiny team may wish to conduct a final visit to your organisation to clarify and confirm members' understanding of organisational practice and procedure, if appropriate.

Invitation to comment

85 There may be other stakeholders, including teaching staff, students or other interested parties, who wish to bring information about you and your provision to our attention. Any comment received will be considered as long as the information is relevant to the scrutiny of your application and submitted before the scrutiny has ended to ensure that it can be given due consideration.

86 Anyone wishing to bring information to our attention should do so in writing, contacting Irene Ainsworth by email i.ainsworth@qaa.ac.uk or by post using the QAA

address given in [Annex 1](#). If we receive any information which is relevant to the detailed scrutiny of your application, we will forward a copy to the scrutiny team and ask the team to consider it. You should provide evidence, such as copies of any correspondence or minutes of meetings relating to the matter you wish to draw to our attention. The team is obliged to corroborate any information it receives with other sources of evidence, and you will be invited to respond to the scrutiny team, as appropriate. ACDAP will be aware of action taken in response to comments received through scrutiny progress reports.

87 To make sure teaching staff and students are aware of the existence of this facility, and the benefits of raising any issues in advance, we will send you a standard email which you should circulate to staff and students once ACDAP has agreed to proceed to detailed scrutiny of your application. We will also send you a standard poster about the protocol for submitting comments. You should display this prominently.

QAA concerns scheme

88 You should be aware that QAA investigates concerns about academic standards and quality in UK higher education where we think these indicate serious systemic or procedural problems. Concerns may be raised by students, staff and other interested parties. If you are subject to a degree awarding powers scrutiny by QAA, the concerns scheme will apply to your organisation.

89 QAA can investigate concerns about:

- academic standards - the level of achievement a student has to reach in order to achieve a particular award or qualification
- academic quality - everything that an organisation provides to ensure its students have the best possible opportunity to achieve the required standard (this includes teaching, learning resources and academic support)
- the accuracy and completeness of the information organisations produce about their higher education programmes.

90 Further information about the concerns process can be found on [our website](#).¹⁶

Final report to ACDAP

91 The detailed scrutiny culminates in a final scrutiny team report to ACDAP. Individual reports produced by team members following their engagements with your organisation will inform the content of the final report, which is intended to offer peer-referenced analysis of the detail of your operations (taking due account of the criteria to be met), and to identify matters warranting particular consideration by ACDAP.

92 In reporting to ACDAP, a scrutiny team is expected to:

- provide clear evidence-based reports and expert advice on how you satisfy or fall short of the criteria
- explain the critical issues
- indicate areas where further development may be required to secure a successful outcome of your application.

¹⁶ www.qaa.ac.uk/complaints/concerns.

93 The scrutiny team will not itself make a recommendation on your application since this is a matter for ACDAP.

94 You will receive the draft report at least eight weeks before the ACDAP meeting at which it is to be considered, and you will be invited to inform QAA (within two weeks of receiving the report) of any factual inaccuracies. The scrutiny team will consider your response and amend the draft report as appropriate. You will then receive a copy of the final report to be considered by ACDAP and be invited to make any further comments that you wish ACDAP members to consider alongside the report.

Information sharing

95 A degree awarding powers final report is confidential and unpublished. For subsequent QAA review activity, and subject to your permission, we will make the final report available to the QAA team appointed to conduct your higher education review, in the interests of ensuring that we make no greater demands on you than is absolutely necessary. See also [QAA's policy on disclosure of records](#) which indicates that you may publish your report once the decision of the Privy Council has been made public.

ACDAP advice to the QAA Board

96 ACDAP's advice to the QAA Board will be formulated on the basis of the scrutiny team's final report, and the Committee's subsequent discussion of the report and your comments (if any). Once the Committee agrees the nature of the recommendation to be made, this will go forward to the next QAA Board meeting. We will notify you if the Committee is not in a position to make a recommendation following its discussion of the report.

97 Where, in the view of ACDAP, the final report raises matters for further consideration or clarification, the Committee may agree that the scrutiny team (or a subset of the team) should undertake further activity to address any matters raised and report back to ACDAP. Alternatively, the Committee may decide to convene a sub-panel of its members to undertake a short and focused visit to your organisation before formulating its advice to the Board. This sub-panel may be supplemented by members with additional external expertise, as appropriate. Most sub-panel visits will be of one day's duration and will normally involve meetings with governors, senior managers, teaching and other staff, students and relevant external interest groups. The visit will result in a further, brief report to ACDAP.

98 Where insufficient evidence exists to provide ACDAP with the necessary assurance that the criteria in the relevant Guidance are satisfied, the Committee may recommend that the application should be turned down or that it should be placed in abeyance to enable you to take such developmental action as necessary, with a view to resuming the scrutiny at a later date. ACDAP will determine the period of abeyance, which is unlikely to be longer than two years. If an extension beyond two years is necessary you should contact QAA to discuss options open to you.

99 If further evidence is not presented by the end of the abeyance period, ACDAP will consider the application to have lapsed. The QAA Board will be informed of ACDAP's recommendation that the period of abeyance should be ended. The Board, in turn, will notify the relevant government department accordingly.

QAA advice to government and final outcome

100 When ACDAP has concluded its consideration of your application, its recommendation and the scrutiny team's report will be submitted to the QAA Board. The Board will then determine the nature of its confidential advice to government. This will be made to the Privy Council through the appropriate territorial minister with higher education responsibilities. We will write to you to confirm that QAA's involvement in the application process has ended. You should be aware that the final decision on the outcome of applications, and the formal notification of those outcomes, are matters for the Privy Council, not QAA.

101 Once you receive formal notification of the outcome from the Privy Council, you should advise QAA. If your application is successful and you are not already a QAA subscriber, arrangements will be made for you to become one. In the case of organisations with degree awarding powers that are time-limited, arrangements will be made to ensure that you are subject to QAA review activity within the time limits established.

Summary table

The table summarises the key steps, in sequence of the application and scrutiny processes for degree awarding powers, as outlined in the previous sections.

1	Application is submitted to the Privy Council at least five weeks before the Advisory Committee on ACDAP meeting ¹⁷ at which the application will be considered (subject to QAA receiving a request from the relevant government department to proceed).		
2	Applicant uploads information including CSA and supporting evidence to QAA secure folder.		
3	ACDAP considers the application.		
4	If ACDAP decides to proceed to detailed scrutiny it appoints a scrutiny team, including members with senior level experience of working within providers having their own degree awarding powers. If it does not decide to proceed, QAA will inform the relevant government department of the outcome of ACDAP's consideration.		
5	Preliminary meeting between the applicant organisation and the QAA officer who will be coordinating the detailed scrutiny of the application (at the applicant's premises).		
6	Scrutiny team members consider documentation (remotely at first) before meeting as a team for planning purposes.		
7	QAA informs applicant of any further documentation required and confirms schedule of activity; this will be updated as the scrutiny progresses.		
8	Reading/discussions/observations, as agreed to test the evidence base.		
9	Team makes first visit to the applicant (1-2 days).		
10	Scrutiny team meets to review progress, as required during the scrutiny process.		
11	Coordinating Officer meets organisational representatives to discuss progress and identify any matters where further evidence is required.		
12	Further observations/meetings/reading as agreed to test the evidence base.		
13	Scrutiny team meets for a final progress review and, if required, undertakes a final visit.		
14	Scrutiny team's draft report is sent to applicant to check for factual accuracy.		
15	Scrutiny team finalises its report, which is sent to the applicant inviting any further comments to be considered.		
16	ACDAP considers the scrutiny team's final report and any further comments submitted by the applicant, with the possible outcomes shown below.		
17	<p>Positive recommendation QAA Board considers the application at its next meeting.</p> <p>QAA gives advice to the relevant government minister following QAA Board consideration.</p>	<p>Further consideration or clarification required ACDAP may establish a sub-panel or it may request that scrutiny team members conduct a short and focused visit to the applicant. ACDAP considers the visit report and formulates its advice and recommendation to the QAA Board.</p> <p>QAA gives advice to the relevant minister following QAA Board consideration.</p>	<p>Decision that provider has not met the criteria ACDAP may recommend a period of abeyance, permitting the applicant a maximum extension of two years to demonstrate that it has met the criteria.</p> <p>ACDAP may advise the QAA Board that the applicant does not meet the criteria.</p> <p>QAA gives advice to the relevant minister following QAA Board consideration.</p>
18	QAA review of successful applicant within six years of degree awarding powers being granted.		

¹⁷ Dates are advertised on the QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/AboutUs/DAP/ACDAP/Pages/ACDAP-meetings.aspx.

Evaluation and follow-up

Terms of engagement

102 Our [terms of engagement](#)¹⁸ set out what you can expect from us and from the degree awarding powers scrutiny process.

Evaluation

103 You will be invited to provide written feedback at two stages in the process: mid-way and at the end of the process. In the case of the former, QAA will send you a form to provide your feedback four weeks before you are scheduled to have a scrutiny progress meeting with the Coordinating Officer. Your feedback should be returned within two weeks of receipt of the form. Any issues arising can then be discussed at the scheduled progress meeting. At the end of the process (that is, following consideration of the application by the QAA Board) you, the Coordinating Officer and the scrutiny team will be asked to evaluate the process.

104 Evaluations will be conducted in confidence by QAA's Research, Information and Enquiry (RIE) team. The outcomes will be used internally to review and improve the operation of the scrutiny process.

QAA policy on the disclosure of records

105 QAA revised its policy on the disclosure of records, including those relating to degree awarding powers/university title, in March 2009. This policy can be found on the QAA website.¹⁹

106 Under the policy, all records are closed until a decision has been reached. After the Privy Council's decision, access to records specified in the policy will be given on request.

107 Following publication of the first review report after the grant of degree awarding powers, or five years after the Privy Council's decision, whichever is the longer, access will be given to the scrutiny team's final report (which may be subject to commercial interest redactions). If you are the subject of such a report you may grant access to the report before this time if you so choose.

108 Ten years after the Privy Council's notification, we will give access, on request, to all remaining degree awarding powers records, subject to any remaining issues of commercial confidentiality.

Representations

109 If ACDAP makes a recommendation to the Board that an application should be rejected, the Committee's recommendation and reasons will be disclosed to you prior to the Board's consideration of your application. This gives you the opportunity to make representations directly to the Board. The process for representations is provided in [Annex 12](#) and on our website.

¹⁸ www.qaa.ac.uk/AboutUs/DAP/Pages/disclosure-policy.aspx.

¹⁹ www.qaa.ac.uk/AboutUs/DAP/Pages/disclosure-policy.aspx.

Subscription to QAA

110 A successful applicant granted renewable UK degree awarding powers is required to subscribe to QAA as a condition of the grant of those powers. If you are not in the publicly funded higher education sector you are required to submit to QAA each year your annual student numbers and your annual report with financial accounts. You are also required to disclose to QAA, in a timely manner, any material changes in circumstances (for example, changes of ownership, location or accreditation arrangements, or difficulties with accreditation, expansion of provision in areas different from those covered at the time of a degree awarding powers scrutiny, student recruitment, progression or completion).

Renewal of degree awarding powers

111 If you have been granted renewable degree awarding powers (that is, for a fixed term period of six years) you will need to obtain positive judgements in the QAA review of your higher education provision. The review will be scheduled before the period of approval ends (usually five years after the grant of degree awarding powers). If you fail to obtain positive QAA review judgements, you will be required to prepare and carry out an action plan agreed with, and completed to the satisfaction of, QAA.

112 QAA will notify the relevant government department of the outcome of your QAA review.

113 Thereafter, should you wish to request renewal of your powers, the request should be addressed to the Privy Council.

Annex 1: Contacts and links

For pre-application enquiries and general information, please contact our Enquiries Team, daputenquiries@qaa.ac.uk.

Contacts

Once you have decided to apply for degree awarding powers you will need to submit your application as follows.

Applicants based in England

One copy of your application should be addressed to:

The Senior Clerk to the Privy Council
Privy Council Offices
2 Carlton Gardens
London SW1Y 5AA

You should also send a copy to:

Institutional title and higher education governance team
Department for Business Innovation and Skills
1 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0ET

Applicants based in Wales

You should send one copy to your contact at:

The Wales Office
Gwydyr House
Whitehall
London SW1A 2ER

You should also send one copy to your contact at:

The Higher Education Division, Department for Education and Skills
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff CF10 3NQ

If you do not have a named contact at the Wales Office and the Welsh Government please get in touch with QAA for information.

Applicants based in Scotland and in Northern Ireland

If you do not have named contacts please get in touch with QAA for information.

QAA copies

25 copies of your application should be sent to:

Dr Irene Ainsworth
Head of Degree Awarding Powers and University Title
Reviews Group
Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
Southgate House
Southgate Street
Gloucester GL1 1UB

Links

Foundation Degree awarding powers

Guidance and criteria	www.gov.uk/government/publications/applying-for-foundation-degree-awarding-powers
Companion guide	www.gov.uk/government/publications/applying-for-foundation-degree-awarding-powers-companion-guide
Frequently asked questions	www.gov.uk/government/publications/foundation-degree-awarding-powers-frequently-asked-questions
Guidance and criteria and companion guide (Welsh Government website)	www.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/foundationdegree

Taught and research degree awarding powers and University Title - England and Wales

Guidance and criteria	www.gov.uk/government/publications/applying-for-powers-to-award-taught-degrees-research-degrees-and-university-title
Guidance on the process of moving to TDAP for further education colleges who have previously been granted FDAP	www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/FDAP-to-TDAP.aspx

Taught and research degree awarding powers and University Title - Scotland and Northern Ireland

Guidance and criteria	www.qaa.ac.uk/AboutUs/DAP/guidance/Pages/guidance-criteria.aspx
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Related guidance

Guidance on scholarship and the pedagogical effectiveness of staff: Expectations for Foundation Degree awarding powers and for taught degree awarding powers	www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/guidance-FDAP-TDAP.aspx
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Other links

Degree awarding powers pages of the QAA website	www.qaa.ac.uk/AboutUs/DAP/Pages/default.aspx
Advisory Committee on Degree Awarding Powers	www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/dap/acdap/pages/advisory-committee-on-degree-awarding-powers-(acdap).aspx
Fees	www.qaa.ac.uk/AboutUs/DAP/fees/Pages/Current-fee-structure-degree-awarding-powers-and-university-title-applications.aspx

Degree awarding powers disclosure policy and terms of engagement

www.qaa.ac.uk/AboutUs/DAP/Pages/disclosure-policy.aspx

Podcasts

We produce regular podcasts about our work, many of which contain information that is relevant, and will be of interest, to applicants. These are available on our website at the following link: www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/podcasts

Complaints and concerns

www.qaa.ac.uk/complaints/concerns

The UK Quality Code for Higher Education

www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/quality-code/Pages/default.aspx

Annex 2: QAA's mission, values and standards

QAA stands for the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. QAA's vision is:

to be the authority on UK higher education standards and quality.

QAA's mission is:

to safeguard standards and improve the quality of UK higher education.

To pursue its mission, QAA has four strategic aims:

- to meet students' needs and be valued by them
- to safeguard standards in an increasingly diverse UK and international context
- to drive improvements in UK higher education
- to improve public understanding of higher education standards and quality.

Our **Strategic Plan 2011-14** explains more about how we meet these strategic aims. It is available in hard copy and on [our website](#).²⁰

QAA's values are:

Integrity

We always aim to be fair, objective and honest in our work, basing our judgements on sound evidence.

Professionalism

We set high professional standards in everything we do, providing relevant and effective services that are trusted by all with an interest in UK higher education.

Accountability

Through safeguarding standards and driving improvements we fulfil our responsibilities. We consult on the development of our work and assess its impact, seeking to provide a high level of service and to be responsive to external demands.

Openness

We are open and approachable about the work we do, and how we do it, believing that this encourages trust and confidence. We publish full details of our review methods, as well as our reports on institutions. We are committed to communicating clearly and accessibly about all aspects of our work.

Independence

To fulfil our responsibilities we must be an independent voice in UK higher education, basing our work on expert, objective scrutiny and analysis.

More information about QAA is available on [our website](#).²¹

²⁰ www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/strategy11-14.

²¹ www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus.

Annex 3: FDAP CSA mapping template

FOUNDATION DEGREE AWARDING POWERS (1 OCTOBER 2010)

A. Governance and academic management		
Criterion A1: A further education institute (FEI) granted Foundation Degree awarding powers is governed, managed and administered effectively, with clear and appropriate lines of accountability for its academic responsibilities. Its financial management is sound and a clear relationship exists between its financial policy and the safeguarding of the quality and standards of its higher education provision. As is generally the case for other organisations receiving degree awarding powers that are not primarily a higher education institution, its principal activities are compatible with the provision of higher education programmes and awards.		
Explanation: Foundation Degree awarding FEIs must be soundly based in all respects (constitutionally, managerially, financially and academically) so that there can be full public confidence in them and their Foundation Degrees. It is important that appropriate safeguards are in place to ensure that financial exigencies and other pressures do not jeopardise academic standards or the quality of programmes as specified in the programme specifications.		
Evidence requirement	CSA paragraph and page number	Supporting evidence
The applicant FEI will be required to provide evidence that:		
i.	its financial planning, quality assurance, and resource allocation policies are coherent and relate to its higher education mission, aims and objectives	
ii.	its higher education activities take full account of the UK Academic Infrastructure, ²² and associated guidance	
iii.	Makes reference to QAA's <i>Foundation Degree qualification benchmark</i> which is part of the Academic Infrastructure	
iv.	its higher education mission and associated policies and systems are understood and applied consistently both by those connected with the delivery of its higher education programmes and, where appropriate, by students	
v.	there is a clarity of function and responsibility at all levels in the FEI in relation to its governance structures and systems for managing its higher education provision	
vi.	there is depth and strength of academic leadership across the whole of its higher education provision	

²² The Academic Infrastructure was replaced by the UK Quality Code for Higher Education from academic year 2012-13. More information about the Quality Code is available at: www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/quality-code/Pages/default.aspx.

vii.	it develops, implements and communicates its academic policies and systems in collaboration with those who have responsibility for the delivery of its higher education programmes, and with relevant stakeholders		
viii.	its academic policies, systems and activities are monitored and reviewed and that appropriate and timely action is taken when deficiencies are identified		
ix.	its academic risk and change management strategies are effective		
x.	it has in place robust mechanisms to ensure that the academic standards of its Foundation Degree awards are not put at risk		
xi.	it has the capability of managing successfully the additional responsibilities that would be vested in it were it to be granted Foundation Degree awarding powers.		

B. Academic Standards and Quality Assurance

Criterion B1: An FEI granted Foundation Degree awarding powers has in place an appropriate regulatory framework to govern the award of its higher education qualifications.

Explanation: The security of the academic standards of Foundation Degrees depends in large measure on the regulations which govern their award. These can be expected to cover a wide variety of topics ranging from the approval of degree schemes through to the conduct of student assessments and appeals against academic decisions. Many of them are dealt with in the *Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education (the Code of Practice)*²³ published by QAA. FEIs that award Foundation Degrees are required to have in place a comprehensive set of regulations covering these matters.

Evidence requirement		CSA paragraph and page number	Supporting evidence
The applicant FEI will be required to provide evidence that:			
i.	the regulatory framework governing its higher education provision (covering, for example, student admissions, progress, assessment, appeals and complaints) is appropriate to its current status and is implemented fully and consistently; and		
ii.	it has created in readiness a regulatory framework appropriate for the granting of its own higher education awards		

²³ The Code of Practice, which was part of the Academic Infrastructure, was replaced by the Quality Code from academic year 2012-13. More information about the Quality Code is available at: www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/quality-code/Pages/default.aspx.

Criterion B2: An FEI granted Foundation Degree awarding powers has clear and consistently applied mechanisms for defining and securing the academic standards of its higher education provision, wherever, however and by whomsoever it is offered.

Explanation: FEIs with Foundation Degree awarding powers need to ensure that their qualifications meet the expectations of the Academic Infrastructure for higher education, published and maintained on behalf of the academic community in the UK by the QAA. Within the Academic Infrastructure the different levels of higher education qualifications and their distinguishing features are described in *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ). In order to meet these expectations, FEIs seeking degree awarding powers will need to ensure that they have appropriate and effective quality assurance structures and mechanisms in place. This is particularly important where elements of a programme are offered outside the college's own environment. The public interest in the consistency and comparability of higher education qualifications requires that all degrees awarded by recognised degree-awarding organisations in the UK should at least meet the expectations of the FHEQ.

Evidence requirement		CSA paragraph and page number	Supporting evidence
The applicant FEI will be required to provide evidence that:			
i.	its higher education awards are offered at levels that correspond to the relevant levels of the FHEQ		
ii.	the management of its higher education provision takes appropriate account of the QAA's <i>Code of Practice</i> , relevant subject benchmark statements, national guidance on programme specifications, and the requirements of any relevant professional, statutory and regulatory bodies		
iii.	in establishing, and then maintaining, comparability of standards with other providers of equivalent level programmes, it explicitly seeks advice from and engagement with external peers and, where appropriate, professional and statutory bodies and relevant employers		
iv.	its programme approval, monitoring and review arrangements are robust, applied consistently, have at all levels a broadly based external dimension and take appropriate account of the specific requirements of different levels of award and different modes of delivery		
v.	where its programmes are delivered outside the college's own environment, appropriate and effective quality assurance mechanisms are used to ensure the maintenance of academic standards and quality		
vi.	there is an explicit and close relationship between academic planning and decisions on resource allocation		

Criterion B3: The education provision of an FEI granted Foundation Degree awarding powers consistently meets its stated learning objectives and achieves its intended outcomes.		
Explanation: FEIs offering higher education awards are expected to consider carefully the purposes and objectives of the programmes they are offering. They are also expected to design their curricula and learning support provision in a way that will give diligent students the best chance of achieving the purposes and objectives and the necessary academic standards for the qualification being sought. FEIs offering higher education awards must have the means of establishing for themselves that their intentions are, in practice, being met.		
Evidence requirement	CSA paragraph and page number	Supporting evidence
The applicant FEI will be required to provide evidence that:		
i. its strategies for learning and assessment are consistent with stated academic objectives and intended learning outcomes		
ii. relevant staff are informed of, and provided with guidance on, its policies and procedures for programme design, monitoring and review		
iii. responsibility for amending or improving new programme proposals is clearly assigned and subsequent action is carefully monitored		
iv. coherence of programmes with multiple elements or alternative pathways is secured and maintained		
v. close links are maintained between learning support services and the FEI's programme planning, approval, monitoring and review arrangements		
vi. robust arrangements exist for ensuring that the learning opportunities provided to those of its students that may be studying at a distance from the FEI or in work based settings are adequate		
vii. through its planning, approval, review and assessment practices, it defines, monitors, reviews and maintains its academic standards		
viii. its assessment criteria and practices are communicated clearly to students and staff		
ix. its assessment practices fully cover all declared learning objectives, learning outcomes and modes of delivery		
x. Appropriately qualified external peers are engaged in its assessment processes and that consistency is maintained between internal and external examiners' marking		
xi. the reliability and validity of its assessment procedures are monitored and that its assessment outcomes inform future programme and student planning		

xii.	clear mechanisms are in place for use when a decision is taken to close a programme or programme element, and that, in doing so, the interests of students are safeguarded		
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Criterion B4: An FEI granted Foundation Degree awarding powers takes effective action to promote strengths and respond to identified limitations.

Explanation: An FEI that has powers to award its own Foundation Degrees must have in place the means of critically reviewing its own performance. It needs to know how it is doing in comparison with other similar organisations and have in place robust mechanisms for disseminating good practice; it must also be able to identify limitations or deficiencies in its own activities and take timely and effective remedial action when this is called for. This implies both internal and external elements in the periodic review of its activities.

Evidence requirement		CSA paragraph and page number	Supporting evidence
The applicant FEI will be required to provide evidence that:			
i.	critical self-assessment is integral to the operation of its higher education provision and that action is taken in response to matters raised through internal or external monitoring and review		
ii.	clear mechanisms exist for assigning and discharging action in relation to the scrutiny, monitoring and review of agreed learning objectives and intended outcomes		
iii.	ideas and expertise from within and outside the FEI – particularly from relevant employers (for example on programme design and development, on teaching, and on student learning and assessment) are drawn into its arrangements for programme design, approval and review		
iv.	effective means exist for encouraging the continuous improvement of quality of provision and student achievement.		

C. Scholarship and the pedagogical effectiveness of academic staff		
Criterion C1: The staff of an FEI granted powers to award Foundation Degrees will be competent to teach, facilitate learning and undertake assessment to the level of the qualifications being awarded.		
Explanation: The capacity and competence of the staff who teach, and who facilitate and assess learning, are central to the value of the education offered to students. FEIs awarding their own degrees have a crucial responsibility to ensure that students' chances of receiving a worthwhile education and securing the necessary academic standards for their Foundation Degree qualification are maximised by effective teaching. This includes a responsibility for ensuring that staff maintain a close and professional understanding of current developments in scholarship in their subjects and that structured opportunities for them to do so are both readily available and widely taken up. It also means that teaching for degree-level qualifications should reflect, in a careful, conscious and intellectually demanding manner, the latest developments in the subject of study. FEIs also have a responsibility for making certain that the assessment of their students is carried out in a professional and consistent way that ensures the maintenance of the academic standards of their degrees.		
Evidence requirement	CSA paragraph and page number	Supporting evidence
The applicant FEI will be required to provide evidence that all teaching staff engaged with the delivery of its higher education programmes have relevant:		
i.	academic and/or professional expertise	
ii.	engagement with the pedagogic development of their discipline (through, for example, membership of subject associations, learned societies and professional bodies)	
iii.	knowledge and understanding of current scholarly developments in their discipline area and at a level appropriate to a Foundation Degree and that such knowledge and understanding directly inform and enhance their teaching	
iv.	opportunities for accessing relevant employment experience and studying the implementation of relevant and up to date professional practice	
v.	staff development and appraisal opportunities aimed at enabling them to develop and enhance their professional competence and scholarship	
In addition, the applicant FEI will be required to provide evidence that staff with key programme management responsibilities (for example, programme leaders and assessment coordinators) have relevant:		
vi.	experience of curriculum development and assessment design	
vii.	engagement with the activities of providers of higher education in other organisations (through, for example, involvement as external examiners, validation panel members, or external reviewers)	

D. Environment supporting the delivery of Foundation Degree programmes		
Criterion D1: The teaching and learning infrastructure of an FEI granted Foundation Degree awarding powers, including its student support and administrative support arrangements, is effective and monitored.		
Explanation		
The teaching and learning infrastructure - all those facilities and activities that are provided to maximise students' chances of experiencing a worthwhile education and of obtaining the qualification they are seeking - is a means to an end. FEIs that award their own Foundation Degrees are expected to have in place mechanisms for monitoring whether their teaching and learning infrastructure is meeting stated objectives and for responding to identified limitations in a timely and effective manner.		
Evidence requirement	CSA paragraph and page number	Supporting evidence
The applicant FEI will be required to provide evidence that:		
i.	the effectiveness of its learning and teaching activities is monitored in relation to stated academic objectives and intended learning outcomes	
ii.	students are informed of the outcomes of assessments in a timely manner	
iii.	constructive and developmental feedback is given to students on their performance	
iv.	feedback from students, staff, employers and other institutional stakeholders is obtained and evaluated and clear mechanisms exist to provide feedback to all such constituencies	
v.	students are advised about, and inducted into, their study programmes in an effective way and account is taken of different students' needs	
vi.	available learning support materials are adequate to support students in the achievement of stated purposes of their study programmes and all students, part-time or full-time, have equal access to learning resources and support materials	
vii.	the effectiveness of any student and staff advisory and counselling services is monitored and any resource needs arising are considered	
viii.	its administrative support systems are able to monitor student progression and performance accurately and provide timely and accurate information to satisfy academic and non-academic management information needs	
ix.	it has in place effective and confidential mechanisms to deal with all complaints regarding academic and non-academic matters	
x.	the staff involved with supporting the delivery of its higher education provision are given adequate opportunities for professional development	

xi.	the information that it produces concerning its higher education provision is accurate and complete; and		
xii.	equality of opportunity is sought and achieved in its activities		

Annex 4: FDAP staffing table

An example of the [staffing table for Foundation Degree awarding powers](#) is available on our website.²⁴

²⁴ www.qaa.ac.uk/AboutUs/DAP/guidance/Documents/DAP-Handbook-Annex4-14.pdf

Annex 5: FDAP applicant profile

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

Application for Foundation Degree awarding powers

Institutional profile for an applicant further education institution (FEI)					
To be submitted with the FEI's critical self-analysis					
Information about the FEI					
Name of FEI:					
Year FEI established:			Year higher education provision started:		
Annual turnover: £			Financial category:		
National Skills Academy provision:					
Number of students (total):					
Number of further education (FE) students:			Number of higher education (HE) students:		
QAA review outcomes (most recent)					
Month/year:	Academic standards:*	Quality of learning opportunities:*	Public information:*		
Ofsted grades (most recent)					
Month/year:	Effectiveness:	Capacity to improve:	Achievement and standards:	Quality of Provision:	Leadership and management:
Breakdown of HE student numbers					
Full-time:		Part-time:		Male (%):	
Students from ethnic minority groups (%):			Students with disabilities (%):		
Level 4:		Level 5:		Level 6:	
Level 7:					
Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) funding					
Number of direct HEFCE-funded student full time equivalents (FTEs):		Number of indirect HEFCE-funded student FTEs:		Number of non HEFCE-funded student FTEs:	
HE provision					
Number of validating bodies:**			Number of programmes:**		
HE success rates					

Degree awarding powers: Handbook for applicants

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-2014(predicted)	
Number of student FTEs					
Retention (%)					
Achievement (%)					
Support for students					
Student survey rating for teaching and learning (%): (Please provide most recent National Student Survey rating, or equivalent, and month/year).					
Percentage of HE students accessing specialist learning support in current academic year (%):					
Staffing					
Number of staff teaching on HE programmes:					
Percentage of staff by qualification	Level 4:	Level 5:	Level 6:	Level 7:	Level 8:
Foundation Degrees					
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-2014 (predicted)	
Number of programmes					
Number of student FTEs					
Progression (%)***				N/a	
Number of employers providing work-based learning for FD students:					
Please notify QAA of any significant changes to any of the information provided that may occur before or during the scrutiny process.					

Notes

* These are IQER core themes; please adapt as required, according to the type of review.

** Please append a list of programmes by validating body with the number of student FTEs on each, unless this is already provided with the critical self-analysis.

*** Progression refers to the percentage of students who progressed to programmes at level 6 of *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) on completion of a Foundation Degree.

Annex 6: Guidance on visits to sites of work-based learning

Introduction

1 Each Foundation Degree awarding powers (FDAP) scrutiny will include visits to work-based learning sites to demonstrate how an applicant seeks to guarantee the quality and standards of its Foundation Degree (FD) provision. Such visits might also be undertaken, if appropriate, during the scrutiny of a taught degree awarding powers application, where an applicant provides a significant level of work-based learning. The applicant is responsible for briefing employers in preparation for workplace visits.

2 At the preliminary meeting the QAA Coordinating Officer (CO) will discuss any implications of an applicant's policy on the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults (if the applicant's provision includes students within these categories) for the scrutiny team's on-site and work-based learning visits.

3 The CO should inform the applicant that, in keeping with the communication protocols, there will be no feedback to employers after workplace visits and that the applicant should advise employers accordingly.

Purpose of work-based learning visits

4 Work-based learning visits are an important part of the FDAP scrutiny process, enabling a scrutiny team to gather a range of evidence by conducting observations and holding meetings with student and employer representatives. However, the team is required to balance the value of workplace evidence against the limited time available and the need to minimise inconvenience to employers.

Planning work-based learning visits

5 Work-based learning may take a variety of forms. The main types are normally included within the following:

- a student in employment studies the work-based learning element at their own place of work
- a student takes up a placement with an employer
- a student in a clinical practice environment
- students have placements in College facilities for example beauty salon or travel office
- students undertake work-related learning in College using live briefs from employers who may, or may not, come to the College during the time when the brief is being introduced/completed.

6 In the light of this the CO will request the following information before the preliminary meeting:

- the FD programmes or, where relevant, taught degree programmes, listed according to the type of work-based learning they include, together with number and types of employer, sites (rough geographical spread and number), number of students at each level on programmes and modes of study
- summary by programme of the rationale and form of the work-based learning, from existing documentation such as validation documents

- College handbooks/information provided for employers, students and tutors on work-based learning and/or sample of course handbooks
- College documentation to support work-based learning. These may include health and safety check, template for agreement with employer; and template for learning agreement.

7 At the preliminary meeting the CO will:

- establish when a schedule of tutor workplace visits, visits by employers to college-based work-based learning can be produced
- request that the College integrates the dates into the schedule of meetings so that team members can cluster observations and visits as much as possible.

8 At the team planning meeting the CO will:

- discuss the information about work-based learning and its formats as submitted to the College
- incorporate work-based learning visits, if available, into the developing schedule, ensuring coverage of all types of work-based learning.

9 During the scrutiny process the scrutiny team will obtain:

- any course specific documentation not provided above
- reports on employer involvement in the design, delivery and assessment of work-based learning
- samples of relevant validation documents/reports
- reports on the applicant's monitoring of work-based learning, including relevant committee minutes
- outcomes and analysis of feedback from employers and students on work-based learning provision.

10 The team's initial visit to the applicant can be expected to include a meeting with employers and with an appropriate cross-section of students to enable the team to explore work-based issues, establish themes to be followed up. This can include previous students. Feedback from these initial meetings will serve to provide one indicator of the number of visits required.

Selecting work-based learning visits

11 Students' mode of study on Foundation Degree programmes or taught degree programmes, if appropriate, will have a bearing on the nature of the work-based learning which they undertake. For example, full-time students may be instrumental in finding their own work placements; placements may not begin until later in the academic year and some students may have simulated work experience. The team will take the different approaches to work-based learning into consideration when planning its meetings and selecting the sites of work-based learning to visit.

12 Other criteria for determining which employers to visit will include:

- the applicant's critical self-analysis
- the scale and nature of its FD provision
- how long/recently particular provision has been established
- year of study
- mode of study

- the number of sites and the distribution of students from each programme across them.

Conducting work-based learning visits

13 To avoid scheduling additional visits, scrutiny team members will aim to fit in with the applicant's existing plans for tutor workplace visits.

14 Team members will observe activities such as tutor meetings with students in the workplace. Team members will also hold meetings with the work-based learning student and employer representatives, preferably the student's line manager and mentor. To encourage an open response, team members will aim to meet individuals separately in the workplace.

15 Team members on visits need to:

- be aware of the student's form of work-based learning
- obtain any course specific documentation not provided above, for example, assessment brief, module description
- be familiar with the advice given to students by the applicant
- have some outline knowledge of the business of the employers to be visited
- keep educational jargon to a minimum
- be sensitive to on-going employer-employee/student/College relationships.

No tour of the workplace will be required beyond the student's immediate working environment.

Annex 7: TDAP CSA mapping template

CRITICAL SELF-ANALYSIS CRITERIA MAPPING TEMPLATE - TAUGHT DEGREE AWARDING POWERS (2004 CRITERIA)

A. Governance and academic management Criterion A1: An organisation granted taught degree awarding powers is governed, managed and administered effectively, with clear and appropriate lines of accountability for its academic responsibilities. Its financial management is sound and a clear relationship exists between its financial policy and the safeguarding of the quality and standards of its higher education provision. In the case of an organisation that is not primarily a higher education institution; its principal activities are compatible with the provision of higher education programmes and awards.			
Explanation: Degree-awarding organisations must be soundly based in all respects (constitutionally, managerially, financially and academically) so that there can be full public confidence in them and their degrees. It is important that appropriate safeguards are in place to ensure that financial exigencies and other pressures do not jeopardise academic standards or the quality of programmes as specified in the programme specifications.			
Evidence requirement The applicant will be required to provide evidence that:		CSA paragraph and page number	Supporting evidence
i.	its financial planning, quality assurance, and resource allocation policies are coherent and relate to its higher education mission, aims and objectives		
ii.	its higher education activities take full account of relevant legislation, the UK Academic Infrastructure, ²⁵ and associated guidance		
iii.	its higher education mission and associated policies and systems are understood and applied consistently both by those connected with the delivery of its higher education programmes and, where appropriate, by students		
iv.	there is a clarity of function and responsibility at all levels in the organisation in relation to its governance structures and systems for managing its higher education provision		
v.	there is depth and strength of academic leadership across the whole of its higher education provision		

²⁵ The Academic Infrastructure was replaced by the Quality Code as of academic year 2012-13, available at: www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/quality-code/Pages/default.aspx.

vi.	it develops, implements and communicates its academic policies and systems in collaboration with those who have responsibility for the delivery of its higher education programmes, and with relevant stakeholders		
vii.	its academic policies, systems and activities are monitored and reviewed and that appropriate and timely action is taken when deficiencies are identified		
viii.	its academic risk and change management strategies are effective		
ix.	it has in place robust mechanisms to ensure that the academic standards of its higher education awards are not put at risk		
x.	it has the capability of managing successfully the additional responsibilities that would be vested in it were it to be granted taught degree awarding powers		

B. Academic Standards and Quality Assurance

Criterion B1: An organisation granted taught degree awarding powers has in place an appropriate regulatory framework to govern the award of its higher education qualifications.

Explanation: The security of the academic standards of degrees and other higher education qualifications depends in large measure on the regulations which govern their award. These can be expected to cover a wide variety of topics ranging from the approval of degree schemes through to the conduct of student assessments and appeals against academic decisions. Many of them are dealt with in the *Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education* (the Code of Practice)²⁶ published by the QAA. Organisations that award degrees are required to have in place a comprehensive set of regulations covering these matters.

Evidence requirement		CSA paragraph and page number	Supporting evidence
The applicant will be required to provide evidence that:			
i.	the regulatory framework governing its higher education provision (covering, for example, student admissions, progress, assessment, appeals and complaints) is appropriate to its current status and is implemented fully and consistently		
ii.	it has in prospect a regulatory framework appropriate for the granting of its own higher education awards		

Criterion B2: An organisation granted taught degree awarding powers has clear and consistently applied mechanisms for defining and securing the academic standards of its higher education provision.

²⁶ The Code of Practice, which was part of the Academic Infrastructure, was replaced by the Quality Code as of academic year 2012-13, available at: www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/quality-code/Pages/default.aspx.

Explanation: Organisations with UK degree awarding powers need to ensure that their qualifications meet the expectations of the Academic Infrastructure for higher education, published and maintained on behalf of the academic community in the UK by the QAA. Within the Infrastructure the different levels of higher education qualifications and their distinguishing features are described in the appropriate FHEQ. In order to meet these expectations, organisations seeking degree awarding powers will need to ensure that they have appropriate and effective quality assurance structures and mechanisms in place. The public interest in the consistency and comparability of higher education qualifications requires that all degrees awarded by recognised degree-awarding organisations in the UK should at least meet the expectations of the FHEQ.			
Evidence requirement The applicant will be required to provide evidence that:		CSA paragraph and page number	Supporting evidence
i.	its higher education awards are offered at levels that correspond to the relevant levels of the FHEQ		
ii.	the management of its higher education provision takes appropriate account of the QAA's <i>Code of Practice</i> , relevant subject benchmark statements, national guidance on programme specifications, and the requirements of any relevant professional and statutory bodies		
iii.	in establishing, and then maintaining, comparability of standards with other providers of equivalent level programmes, it explicitly seeks advice from external peers and, where appropriate, professional and statutory bodies		
iv.	its programme approval, monitoring and review arrangements are robust, applied consistently, have at all levels a broadly based external dimension and take appropriate account of the specific requirements of different levels of award and different modes of delivery		
v.	there is an explicit and close relationship between academic planning and decisions on resource allocation		

Criterion B3: The education provision of an organisation granted taught degree awarding powers consistently meets its stated learning objectives and achieves its intended outcomes.			
Explanation: Organisations offering higher education awards are expected to consider carefully the purposes and objectives of the programmes they are offering. They are also expected to design their curricula and learning support provision in a way that will give diligent students the best chance of achieving the purposes and objectives and the necessary academic standards for the qualification being sought. Organisations offering higher education awards must have the means of establishing for themselves that their intentions are, in practice, being met.			
Evidence requirement The applicant will be required to provide evidence that:		CSA paragraph and page number	Supporting evidence
i.	its strategies for learning and assessment are consistent with stated academic objectives and intended learning outcomes		

ii.	relevant staff are informed of, and provided with guidance on, its policies and procedures for programme design, monitoring and review		
iii.	responsibility for amending or improving new programme proposals is clearly assigned and subsequent action is carefully monitored		
iv.	coherence of programmes with multiple elements or alternative pathways is secured and maintained		
v.	close links are maintained between learning support services and the organisation's programme planning, approval, monitoring and review arrangements		
vi.	robust arrangements exist for ensuring that the learning opportunities provided to those of its students that may be studying at a distance from the organisation are adequate		
vii.	through its planning, approval, review and assessment practices, it defines, monitors, reviews and maintains its academic standards		
viii.	its assessment criteria and practices are communicated clearly to students and staff		
ix.	its assessment practices fully cover all declared learning objectives, learning outcomes and modes of delivery		
x.	appropriately qualified external peers are engaged in its assessment processes and that consistency is maintained between internal and external examiners' marking		
xi.	the reliability and validity of its assessment procedures are monitored and that its assessment outcomes inform future programme and student planning		
xii.	clear mechanisms are in place for use when a decision is taken to close a programme or programme element, and that, in doing so, the interests of students are safeguarded		

Criterion B4: An organisation granted taught degree awarding powers takes effective action to promote strengths and respond to identified limitations.

Explanation: An organisation that has powers to award its own taught degrees must have in place the means of reviewing critically its own performance. It needs to know how it is doing in comparison with other similar organisations and have in place robust mechanisms for dissemination good practice; it must also be able to identify limitations or deficiencies in its own activities and take timely and effective remedial action when this is called for. This implies both internal and external elements in the periodic review of its activities.

Evidence requirement		CSA paragraph and page number	Supporting evidence
The applicant will be required to provide evidence that:			
i.	critical self-assessment is integral to the operation of its higher education provision and that action is taken in response to matters raised through internal or external monitoring and review		
ii.	clear mechanisms exist for assigning and discharging action in relation to the scrutiny, monitoring and review of agreed learning objectives and intended outcomes		
iii.	ideas and expertise from within and outside the organisation (for example on programme design and development, on teaching, and on student learning and assessment) are drawn into its arrangements for programme design, approval and review		
iv.	effective means exist for encouraging the continuous improvement of quality of provision and student achievement.		

C. Scholarship and the pedagogical effectiveness of academic staff			
Criterion C1: The staff of an organisation granted powers to award taught degrees will be competent to teach, facilitate learning and undertake assessment to the level of the qualifications being awarded.			
Explanation: The capacity and competence of the staff who teach, and who facilitate and assess learning, are central to the value of the education offered to students. Organisations awarding their own degrees have a crucial responsibility to ensure that students' chances of receiving a worthwhile education and securing the necessary academic standards for their qualification are maximised by effective teaching. This includes a responsibility for ensuring that staff maintain a close and professional understanding of current developments in research and scholarship in their subjects and that structured opportunities for them to do so are both readily available and widely taken up. It also means that teaching for degree-level qualifications should reflect, in a careful, conscious and intellectually demanding manner, the latest developments in the subject of study. In the case of organisations offering doctorates undertaken wholly or in part by means of courses of instruction, it is particularly important that teaching is carried out by staff who are active and recognised participants in research and/or advanced scholarship. Organisations also have a responsibility for making certain that the assessment of their students is carried out in a professional and consistent way that ensures the maintenance of the academic standards of their degrees.			
Evidence requirement		CSA paragraph and page number	Supporting evidence
The applicant will be required to provide evidence that all teaching staff engaged with the delivery of its higher education programmes have relevant:			
i.	academic and/or professional expertise		

ii.	engagement with the pedagogic development of their discipline (through, for example, membership of subject associations, learned societies and professional bodies)		
iii.	knowledge and understanding of current research and advanced scholarship in their discipline area and that such knowledge and understanding directly inform and enhance their teaching; and (in the case of those teaching on doctoral programmes offered wholly or in part by courses of instruction) active personal engagement with research and/or advanced scholarship to a level commensurate with the degrees being offered		
iv.	staff development and appraisal opportunities aimed at enabling them to develop and enhance their professional competence and scholarship		
In addition, the applicant organisation will be required to provide evidence that staff with key programme management responsibilities (for example, programme leaders and assessment coordinators) have relevant:			
v.	experience of curriculum development and assessment design		
vi.	engagement with the activities of providers of higher education in other organisations (through, for example, involvement as external examiners, validation panel members, or external reviewers)		

D. Environment supporting the delivery of taught higher education programmes

Criterion D1: The teaching and learning infrastructure of an organisation granted taught degree awarding powers, including its student support and administrative support arrangements, is effective and monitored.

Explanation

The teaching and learning infrastructure - all those facilities and activities that are provided to maximise students' chances of experiencing a worthwhile education and of obtaining the qualification they are seeking - is a means to an end. Organisations that award their own degrees are expected to have in place mechanisms for monitoring whether their teaching and learning infrastructure is meeting stated objectives and for responding to identified limitations in a timely and effective manner.

Evidence requirement

The applicant organisation will be required to provide evidence that:

		CSA paragraph and page number	Supporting evidence
i.	the effectiveness of its learning and teaching activities is monitored in relation to stated academic objectives and intended learning outcomes		
ii.	students are informed of the outcomes of assessments in a timely manner		
iii.	constructive and developmental feedback is given to students on their performance		

iv.	feedback from students, staff, (and where possible) employers and other institutional stakeholders is obtained and evaluated and clear mechanisms exist to provide feedback to all such constituencies		
v.	students are advised about, and inducted into, their study programmes in an effective way and account is taken of different students' needs		
vi.	available learning support materials are adequate to support students in the achievement of stated purposes of their study programmes		
vii.	the effectiveness of any student and staff advisory and counselling services is monitored and any resource needs arising are considered		
viii.	its administrative support systems are able to monitor student progression and performance accurately and provide timely and accurate information to satisfy academic and non-academic management information needs		
ix.	it has in place effective and confidential mechanisms to deal with all complaints regarding academic and non-academic matters		
x.	the staff involved with supporting the delivery of its higher education provision are given adequate opportunities for professional development		
xi.	the information that it produces concerning its higher education provision is accurate and complete		
xii.	equality of opportunity is sought and achieved in its activities		

Annex 8: TDAP staffing table

An example of the [staffing table for taught degree awarding powers](#) is available on our website.²⁷

²⁷ www.qaa.ac.uk/AboutUs/DAP/guidance/Documents/DAP-Handbook-Annex8-14.pdf

Annex 9: TDAP applicant profile

Taught degree awarding powers (TDAP): Applicant profile	
To be submitted at the time of application	
Information about the applicant organisation	
Name of applicant organisation:	
Year of establishment:	Year higher education provision started:
Student/staff population data	
Total number of full-time/fractional academic staff/full-time equivalent (FTE)	
Total number of full-time/fractional academic staff and FTE teaching on higher education provision	
Total number of full-time/fractional academic support staff/full-time equivalent (FTE)	
Total number of students/FTE registered on higher education provision	
Higher Education provision (Please append a list of programmes by validating body with the number of students/FTE on each)	
Number and names of validating bodies:	
Number of bachelor's and master's degree programmes:	

Annex 10: RDAP CSA mapping template

CRITICAL SELF-ANALYSIS CRITERIA MAPPING TEMPLATE - RESEARCH DEGREE AWARDING POWERS (2004 CRITERIA)

Criterion 1: The organisation's supervision of its research students, and any teaching it undertakes at doctoral level, is informed by a high level of professional knowledge of current research and advanced scholarly activity in its subjects of study.			
Explanation: The award of degrees that recognise the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other forms of advanced scholarship, places a particular and substantial responsibility upon an awarding body. The organisation's academic staff should accordingly command the respect and confidence of their academic peers across the higher education sector as being worthy to deliver research degree programmes. Organisations wishing to offer research degrees should have in place a strong underpinning culture that actively encourages and supports creative, high quality research and scholarship amongst the organisation's academic staff and its doctoral and other research students.			
Evidence requirement The applicant will be required to demonstrate that the staff involved with the delivery of its research degree programmes have:		CSA paragraph and page number	Supporting evidence
i.	substantial relevant knowledge, understanding and experience of both current research and advanced scholarship in their discipline area and that such knowledge, understanding and experience directly inform and enhance their supervision and teaching		
ii.	staff development and appraisal opportunities aimed at enabling them to develop and enhance their knowledge of current research and advanced scholarship		
In addition, the applicant organisation will be required to provide evidence that:			
iii.	a significant proportion (normally around a half as a minimum) of its full-time academic staff are active and recognised contributors to subject associations, learned societies and relevant professional bodies		
iv.	a significant proportion (normally around a third as a minimum) of its academic staff have recent (i.e. within the past three years) personal experience of research activity in other UK or international university institutions by, for example, acting as external examiners for research degrees, serving as validation/review panel members, or contributing to collaborative research projects with other organisations		

50

v.	a significant proportion (normally around a third as a minimum) of its academic staff who are engaged in research or other forms of advanced scholarship, can demonstrate achievements that are recognised by the wider academic community to be of national and/or international standing (e.g. as indicated by authoritative external peer reviews)		
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Criterion 2: The organisation satisfies relevant national guidance relating to the award of research degrees			
Evidence requirement		CSA paragraph and page number	Supporting evidence
The applicant organisation will be required to demonstrate that it satisfies, or has the capacity to satisfy, the expectations of:			
i.	the FHEQ in relation to the levels of its research degree programmes		
ii.	the QAA's Code of Practice ²⁸		
iii.	research degree management frameworks issued by relevant research councils, funding bodies and professional/statutory bodies		

Criterion 3: Doctor of Philosophy conferments			
Evidence requirement		CSA paragraph and page number	Supporting evidence
i.	The applicant organisation has achieved more than 30 Doctor of Philosophy conferments, awarded through partner universities in the UK		

²⁸ The Code of Practice, which was part of the Academic Infrastructure, was replaced by the Quality Code as of academic year 2012-13 available at: www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/quality-code/Pages/default.aspx.

Annex 11: RDAP data tables

If applying for research degree awarding powers (RDAP), the following tables must be completed and included with an applicant's critical self-analysis. The tables provide a helpful basis for discussion and enable RDAP applications to be placed in context.

Demographics

Data to be provided by the applicant organisation	Notes
Student numbers - full-time equivalent (FTE)	
Research student numbers - FTE	
Number of students who are also members of staff	
The above figure as a percentage of total student FTE	
Number of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) completions	
Numbers of PhD students to have completed successfully in each of the last three academic years	
Number of the above externally funded on competitive basis	
Numbers of academic units to have PhD students	
Range and median numbers of PhD students in these academic units	
Number of full-time/fractional academic staff and FTE	
Number and proportion of full-time academic staff with PhDs	
Number and proportion of full-time academic staff with PhD supervisory experience	
Number and proportion of full-time academic staff internally approved to supervise PhDs	
Number of professors	
Maximum PhD supervisory load of academic staff (by head count and FTE)	
Numbers of supervisors in the last three academic years whose load has exceeded this figure	
Academic areas not currently permitted to supervise PhD students (a) numerically and (b) as a percentage of the whole	

RDAP-relevant research information

Data to be provided by the applicant organisation	Notes
Latest Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) results	
Number of units of assessment and numbers/proportion of academic staff entered in RAE/REF	
Amount of Research Council funding in the three year period to commencement of scrutiny	
Amount of quality-related (RAE/REF) funding in each of the last three academic years preceding the submission of an RDAP application	
Amount of other forms of research funding (broadly defined to include knowledge transfer consultancies) received in each of the three years preceding the submission of an RDAP application	

Information about staff

Test 1: Professional affiliations of full-time staff

You must be able to demonstrate that a significant proportion (normally around a half as a minimum) of your full-time academic staff are active and recognised contributors to subject associations, learned societies and relevant professional bodies.

Data to be provided by the applicant organisation	Notes
Number and proportion of full-time academic staff who are active and recognised contributors to professional associations, learned societies or subject associations (data should be provided for the three years immediately preceding the submission of an RDAP application)	

Test 2: Research activity of full-time staff

You must be able to demonstrate that a significant proportion (normally around a third as a minimum) of your full-time academic staff have recent (within the past three years) personal experience of research activity in other UK or international university institutions, for example, by acting as external examiners for research degrees, serving as validation/review panel members, or contributing to collaborative research projects with other organisations.

Data to be provided by the applicant organisation	Notes
Number and proportion of full-time academic staff who have engaged in collaborative research with counterparts in another UK higher education institution in the three years immediately preceding the submission of an RDAP application	
Number and proportion of full-time academic staff who have contributed to the approval or review of research or research supervisory provision in another UK higher education institution in the three years immediately preceding the submission of an RDAP application	
Number and proportion of full-time academic staff with experience of external examining research degrees in the three years immediately preceding the submission of an RDAP application	

Test 3: Academic achievements of full-time staff

A significant proportion (normally around a third as a minimum) of your full-time academic staff who are engaged in research or other forms of advanced scholarship must be able to demonstrate achievements that are recognised by the wider academic community to be of national and/or international standing (typically, achievements testified by authoritative external peer reviews).

Data to be provided by the applicant organisation	Notes
Number and proportion of full-time academic staff who have published journal articles in the three years immediately preceding the submission of an RDAP application	
Number and proportion of full-time academic staff who have delivered invited/keynote conference papers or public lectures in the three years immediately preceding the submission of an RDAP application	
Number and proportion of full-time academic staff who have published or otherwise produced other public/professional outputs in the three years immediately preceding the submission of an RDAP application	
Number and proportion of full-time academic staff who have organised national/international conferences in the three year years immediately preceding the submission of an RDAP application	
Number and proportion of full-time academic staff who have done none of the above in the three years immediately preceding the submission of an RDAP application	
Number and proportion of full-time academic staff either entered in the latest RAE/REF or with external confirmation of their eligibility	
The proportion of approved supervisors (full-time academic staff) of PhD	

students who meet the above criterion	
Number and proportion of full-time academic staff who have been editors or members of editorial boards of peer review journals in the three years immediately preceding the submission of an RDAP application	

Test 4: Credentials of part-time staff

Where part-time (fractional) staff contribute significantly to an applicant organisation's research-related activities, the organisation is invited to submit a separate analysis relating to its fractional staff as follows.

Data to be provided by the applicant organisation	Notes
Number and proportion of fractional academic staff who are active and recognised contributors to professional associations, learned societies or subject associations (data should be provided for the three years immediately preceding the submission of an RDAP application)	
Number and proportion of fractional academic staff who have engaged in collaborative research with counterparts in another UK higher education institution in the three years immediately preceding the submission of an RDAP application	
Number and proportion of fractional academic staff who have contributed to the approval or review of research or research supervisory provision in another UK higher education institution in the three years immediately preceding the submission of an RDAP application	
Number and proportion of fractional academic staff with experience of externally examining research degrees in the three years immediately preceding the submission of an RDAP application	
Number and proportion of fractional academic staff who have published journal articles in the three years immediately preceding the submission of an RDAP application	
Number and proportion of fractional academic staff who have delivered invited/keynote conference papers or public lectures in the three years immediately preceding the submission of an RDAP application	
Number and proportion of fractional academic staff who have published or otherwise produced other public/professional outputs in the three years immediately preceding the submission of an RDAP application	
Number and proportion of fractional academic staff who have organised national/international conferences in the three year years immediately preceding the submission of an RDAP application	
Number and proportion of fractional academic staff who have done none of the above in the three years immediately preceding the submission of an RDAP application	
Number and proportion of fractional academic staff either entered in RAE 2008 or with external confirmation of their eligibility	
The proportion of approved supervisors (fractional academic staff) of PhD students whose achievements are recognised by the wider academic community to be of national and/or international standing (typically, achievements testified by authoritative external peer reviews)	
Number and proportion of fractional academic staff who have been editors or members of editorial boards of peer review journals in the three years immediately preceding the submission of an RDAP application	

Annex 12: Representations on degree awarding powers applications

Introduction

1 QAA does not make decisions on degree awarding powers applications, but provides advice to the relevant government department, with the final outcome being decided by the Privy Council. Whilst QAA is not the decision making body, it is concerned to ensure that the advice that it provides on applications is reasonable and fair. Therefore, in the event that an applicant institution has concerns about the advice being given on its application, it may make representations to QAA before the advice is provided to the relevant government department. This provides an opportunity for QAA to reconsider, and in certain circumstances amend, its advice. This document sets out the procedure for making representations, and how these will be dealt with by QAA.

Submitting representations

2 Representations may be submitted by an applicant to QAA if:

- (a) the Advisory Committee on Degree Awarding Powers (ACDAP) advises that the application should not proceed to the detailed scrutiny stage
- (b) a scrutiny team has made findings which, in the view of the applicant, may adversely affect their application for degree awarding powers
- (c) ACDAP advises that the application for degree awarding powers be rejected.

3 Applicants must notify the Head of Degree Awarding Powers and University Title within one week of receiving notification of ACDAP's advice under 2(a) or 2(c), or receipt of the scrutiny team's report under 2(b), of their intention to submit representations. The applicant then has a further three weeks to submit representations.

Grounds for reconsideration

4 The advice of ACDAP or the findings of a scrutiny team will only be reconsidered if either or both of the following are found to apply:

- (a) procedure: ACDAP/the scrutiny team failed to carry out agreed procedures, or exceeded its powers, in such a way that the legitimacy of the conclusions reached are called into question
- (b) rationality of conclusions: ACDAP/the scrutiny team's conclusions were unreasonable or disproportionate in the light of the available evidence.

The applicant should set out clearly and explicitly in their representations the ways in which it considers the findings or advice to be flawed based on the grounds for reconsideration set out in (a) and (b) above.

Responses to representations

5 If the representations relate to the advice of ACDAP under 2(a) or 2(c) above, the Head of Degree Awarding Powers and University Title will seek the comments of the Chair of ACDAP on the representations, who will have two weeks to respond. The Chair will consult with the members of ACDAP in formulating the response. The response of the Chair of ACDAP will then be made available to the applicant and an opportunity will be given to submit final representations.

6 If the representations relate to the findings of a scrutiny team, under 2(b) above, the Head of Degree Awarding Powers and University Title will seek the comments of the scrutiny team on the representations, who will have two weeks to respond. The response of the scrutiny team will then be made available to the applicant and an opportunity will be given to submit final representations.

Determination

7 If the representations relate to the findings of a scrutiny team, the representations will be considered by ACDAP who will decide whether the findings need to be reconsidered. If the representations relate to the advice of ACDAP, the representations will be considered by the QAA Board who will decide whether the advice needs to be reconsidered.

8 In determining whether the findings of a scrutiny team need to be reconsidered, ACDAP will consider:

- (a) the scrutiny team's report
- (b) the representations from the applicant
- (c) the scrutiny team's response to the applicant's representations
- (d) the applicant's final representations referred to in paragraph 6 above.

9 In determining whether the advice of ACDAP needs to be reconsidered, the QAA Board will consider:

- (a) ACDAP's advice
- (b) the representations from the applicant
- (c) the Chair of ACDAP's response to the applicant's representations
- (d) the applicant's final representations referred to in paragraph 5 above.²⁹

10 ACDAP, under paragraph 8 above, and the QAA Board, under paragraph 9 above, will not consider any document that has not been identified and (if sought) provided to the applicant in advance of the meeting where the documents will be considered.

11 If ACDAP/QAA Board concludes on the balance of probabilities that there was no procedural deficiency such as to call the conclusions into question, and/or that the conclusions reached were not unreasonable or disproportionate, ACDAP/QAA Board shall determine that no reconsideration of the advice/findings take place.

12 If ACDAP/QAA Board concludes on the balance of probabilities that there has been a deficiency of process such as to call the conclusions into question, ACDAP/QAA Board shall determine that the advice/findings be reconsidered.

13 If ACDAP concludes that the findings of a scrutiny team be reconsidered, it shall take into account the extent or seriousness of the flaw, and may direct either that:

- (a) that the whole scrutiny be set aside and a new scrutiny be carried out by a
- (b) new team
- (c) that particular areas of the scrutiny be set aside and a new scrutiny of those areas be carried out by a new team

²⁹ There will be separation of Board and ACDAP chairing responsibilities in 2014. In the meantime, whilst the Chair of the Board is also the Chair of ACDAP, the Chair will absent himself from the Board's consideration of representations and will nominate another independent member of the Board to chair the meeting.

(d) that particular areas of the scrutiny be set aside and reconsidered by the same scrutiny team.

14 If the QAA Board concludes that the findings of a scrutiny team be reconsidered, it shall take into account the extent or seriousness of the flaw, and may direct that:

(a) ACDAP reconsider the whole application

(b) ACDAP reconsider particular areas of its advice.

15 In making the above determinations, ACDAP/QAA Board shall give reasons for its decision.

Annex 13: The UK Quality Code for Higher Education

In considering a provider's management of its higher education provision, scrutiny teams will be guided by external reference points. Principal among these is the **UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code)** which QAA has developed in conjunction with the UK higher education sector with a view to defining clear and explicit **Expectations** for UK higher education.

From the 2012-13 academic year, the Quality Code replaces the set of national reference points known as the Academic Infrastructure. The Quality Code gives all higher education providers a shared starting point for setting, describing and assuring the academic standards of their higher education awards and programmes and the quality of the learning opportunities they provide. It is the nationally agreed, definitive point of reference for all those involved in delivering higher education programmes that lead to an award from, or are validated by, a UK degree-awarding body. Providers use it to design their respective policies for maintaining academic standards and quality.

The Quality Code is in three parts:

- Part A: Setting and maintaining threshold academic standards
- Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality
- Part C: Information about higher education provision.

Each part consists of a number of **Chapters**, each covering a specific theme and containing an Expectation. These are the Expectations that all UK higher education providers subject to QAA scrutiny or review are required to meet.

The Quality Code is based on a number of key values, which are set out below.

- All students are treated fairly, equitably and as individuals.
- Students have the opportunity to contribute to the shaping of their learning experience.
- Students are properly and actively informed at appropriate times of matters relevant to their programmes of study.
- All policies and processes relating to study and programmes are clear and transparent.
- Strategic oversight of academic standards and academic quality is at the highest level of academic governance of the provider.
- All policies and processes are regularly and effectively monitored, reviewed and improved.
- Sufficient and appropriate external involvement exists for the maintenance of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities.
- Staff are supported, enabling them in turn to support students' learning experiences.

Structure and content

The following provides an overview of the structure and content of the Quality Code.

Part A: Setting and maintaining threshold academic standards

These Chapters cover the issues relevant to the setting and maintaining of academic standards.

Chapter A1: *The national level*

Chapter A2: *The subject and qualification level* Chapter A3: *The programme level*

Chapter A4: *Approval and review*

Chapter A5: *Externality*

Chapter A6: *Assessment of achievement of learning outcomes*

Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality

These Chapters cover the issues relevant to ensuring that the quality of learning opportunities meets expectations and is continually being improved.

Chapter B1: *Programme design and approval*

Chapter B2: *Admissions*

Chapter B3: *Learning and teaching*

Chapter B4: *Student support, learning resources and careers education, information, advice and guidance*

Chapter B5: *Student engagement*

Chapter B6: *Assessment of students and accreditation of prior learning*

Chapter B7: *External examining*

Chapter B8: *Programme monitoring and review*

Chapter B9: *Complaints and appeals*

Chapter B10: *Management of collaborative arrangements*

Chapter B11: *Research degrees*

Part C: Information about higher education provision

Part C: Information about higher education provision of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education sets out the Expectation concerning information about the learning opportunities offered that institutions in the higher education sector are required to meet, namely that they should produce information for their intended audiences about the learning opportunities they offer that is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

From 2013-14, QAA's Higher Education Review process will apply to providers with access to funding from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and from the Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland and alternative providers who subscribe to QAA. One of the aims of Higher Education Review is to inform students and the wider public as to whether a provider produces information for applicants, students and other users that is fit-for-purpose, accessible and trustworthy. Applicants that are not subject to funding council information requirements are strongly encouraged to make available information as set out in the HEFCE publication *Provision of information about higher education* (HEFCE 2011/18).

Further information about the Quality Code can be found on the QAA website.³⁰

³⁰ www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/quality-code/Pages/default.aspx.

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