



QAA

A large graphic composed of several interlocking puzzle pieces. The central piece is dark grey and contains the title text. Other pieces are light grey and purple, arranged in a circular pattern around the center.

UK Quality Code for Higher Education

Part A: Setting and maintaining
threshold academic standards
Chapter A4: Approval and review

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Introduction

The following supersedes parts of the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice), Section 7: Programme design, approval, monitoring and review* (2006) published by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), and forms a Chapter of the new UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code).

The Quality Code

The Quality Code is the definitive reference point for all those involved in delivering higher education which leads to an award from or is validated by a UK higher education provider. It makes clear what institutions are required to do, what they can expect of each other, and what the general public can expect of all higher education providers. These Expectations express key matters of principle that the higher education community has identified as important for the assurance of quality and academic standards.

Introduction to this Chapter

This Chapter of the Quality Code takes as its starting point the principle that formal and effective procedures should exist in all institutions for the design, approval, monitoring and review of programmes of study.

For the purpose of this Chapter of the Quality Code a programme is defined as an approved curriculum followed by a registered student. This will normally be a named award route that leads to the intended learning outcomes set out in the relevant programme specification. Programmes may be offered at different levels within a single subject. A programme may be multidisciplinary, for example, a joint honours degree or a combined honours degree. The term programme may also refer to the main pathways through a modular scheme, which may itself include several subjects. In many institutions programmes are constructed from individual units or modules which have their own outcomes. The principles of design, approval, monitoring and review that are set out in this Chapter of the Quality Code may, where appropriate, be equally applied to such units.

Programme design is a creative and often innovative activity. The processes used by institutions to approve, monitor and review academic programmes should foster creativity, and encourage a culture of continuous enhancement of provision.

Expectations about approval and review

The Quality Code sets out the following Expectation about programme approval and review, which higher education institutions are required to meet.

Higher education providers have in place effective processes to approve and periodically review the validity and relevance of programmes.

Indicators relating to programme approval which will assist institutions in meeting the above Expectation can be found in *Chapter B1: Programme design and approval*. Indicators relating to periodic review can be found in *Chapter B8: Programme monitoring and review*.

These two Chapters also each contain a set of prompts which are intended to provide guidance for institutions when engaging in programme design, approval and review. See Appendix 2 of *Chapter B1: Programme design and approval*, and Appendix 3 of *Chapter B8: Programme monitoring and review*.

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