



**Guidance on the taught  
degree-awarding powers process  
for further education colleges  
previously granted Foundation  
Degree-awarding powers**

**January 2013**

## Introduction

This guidance outlines the arrangements to be adopted in the event of a further education college applying for taught degree-awarding powers, having previously been granted Foundation Degree-awarding powers. It should be read in conjunction with QAA's *Guidance on scholarship and the pedagogical effectiveness of staff: Expectations for Foundation Degree-awarding powers and for taught degree-awarding powers* (QAA, January 2013).<sup>1</sup> As that guidance makes clear, the expectations for taught degree-awarding powers are of a significantly different order to those for Foundation Degree-awarding powers, given that a successful applicant will be able to award bachelor's degrees, bachelor's degrees with honours and taught master's degrees in its own name. As such, an applicant will need to provide demonstrable evidence that it meets the higher level of expectations associated with taught degree-awarding powers.

An applicant should also refer to the following documents:

- a government guidance for applicant institutions in England and Wales: *Applications for the Grant of Taught Degree Awarding Powers, Research Degree Awarding Powers and University Title* (August 2004) (the **Guidance**)<sup>2</sup>
- b *Supplementary notes for taught and research degree-awarding powers (England and Wales)* (QAA, January 2012)<sup>3</sup>
- c *Master's degree characteristics* (QAA, March 2010).<sup>4</sup>

## The application process

The key steps in the application process are set out in Annex 1. As with all other variants of degree-awarding powers, the application process begins and ends with the Privy Council and is based on the submission of a Critical Self-Analysis (CSA) by the Chair of the College Corporation, with supporting evidence relevant to the application. Since the applicant already holds Foundation Degree-awarding powers, the CSA should refer to institutional developments since those powers were granted. The CSA should also include letters from the vice-chancellors of the applicant's validating degree bodies offering comment on the applicant's capacity to discharge the responsibilities associated with the grant of taught degree-awarding powers.

The following should be provided at the time of application:

- a information about the higher education courses that the applicant delivers, and student numbers on those courses, using the template at Annex 2
- b an outline analysis of academic staff members' academic and professional qualifications, and information about their experience and expertise (template at Annex 3). It is expected that this outline will be based on the applicant's own detailed analysis of the capacity of its staff to teach at bachelor's degree, bachelor's with honours and master's degree level.

The onus is on the applicant to present its case to grant awards up to and including taught master's degrees in its own name. Consequently, the CSA should be seen as a key element in demonstrating the existence of the 'well-founded, cohesive and self-critical academic community that demonstrates firm guardianship of its standards' referred to in the **Guidance**.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/guidance-FDAP-TDAP.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/guidance-FDAP-TDAP.aspx)

<sup>2</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/32388/11-781-applications-for-degree-awarding-powers-guidance.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/32388/11-781-applications-for-degree-awarding-powers-guidance.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/Supplementary-notes-DAP.pdf](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/Supplementary-notes-DAP.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/MastersDegreeCharacteristics.pdf](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/MastersDegreeCharacteristics.pdf)

The applicant should submit with its CSA: a completed QAA template indicating where in the CSA and in its evidence base it addresses the criteria, accompanying explanations, and the associated evidence requirements as set out in the **Guidance** (see Annex 4).

The CSA should include a list of evidence the applicant has used to establish that it is ready to take on the significant responsibilities that come with taught degree-awarding powers. Evidence cited in the list and other information such as prospectuses, strategic and operational plans, teaching quality handbooks and staff handbooks should be uploaded to QAA at the time of application.

The application should also be accompanied by an academic calendar indicating the dates and times of meetings, validation/review events, assessment board meetings and other activity relevant to the application that will occur over the coming year. Such activity should be expected to be subject to scrutiny, should the Advisory Committee on Degree Awarding Powers (ACDAP) agree to proceed to detailed scrutiny of the application.

## **Timing of applications**

Following receipt by QAA of a formal request from the relevant government department to consider an application, the applicant's CSA will be considered at the next meeting of ACDAP, which typically meets on a quarterly basis (usually in September, December, March and June, although precise timings may vary in light of members' availability).

QAA should receive any request for advice from the relevant government department, and 30 copies of the application from the applicant, in addition to material submitted electronically, at least three weeks before the meeting at which the application is to be considered.

## **Taught degree-awarding powers scrutiny process**

In addressing the criteria to be met, QAA will expect the CSA to critically reflect on, and evaluate, the way in which an applicant has exercised stewardship of its Foundation Degree-awarding powers to date. The applicant will need to provide evidence of a strong track record of delivering higher education at bachelor's degree, bachelor's degree with honours and master's degree level, demonstrating how it has developed its intellectual, organisational, financial and physical capacity and demonstrating its capability to meet the obligations that the grant of taught degree-awarding powers brings. To that end, and as part of its scrutiny of an application, QAA may contact the vice-chancellors of the applicant's validating degree bodies direct for comment.

The applicant should expect detailed consideration to be given to the means by which it sets and seeks to ensure i) the attainment of appropriate academic standards (for example through the design, development, approval, monitoring and review of programmes, and through the assessment of students) and ii) the effectiveness of the mechanisms used to assure and enhance the quality of taught degrees to be awarded in its name.

The duration of the scrutiny process will depend on the time required to test the evidence used by the applicant to inform the production of its CSA. In this context, the evidence provided by an applicant's previous experience of a Foundation Degree-awarding powers scrutiny is expected to provide a platform on which to build and evaluate developmental activity undertaken subsequently, reflecting the 'journey' on which the applicant has embarked. It should also enable QAA to form a view on whether the applicant has reached a stage of institutional maturity to justify the autonomy that taught degree-awarding powers bring, without detriment to the good standing of UK degree qualifications.

## **Initial consideration of applications by ACDAP**

ACDAP will consider the application in confidence and will take account of the **Guidance** in determining action to be taken. If ACDAP agrees that the CSA has established a prima facie case to proceed to detailed scrutiny of the quantitative and qualitative evidence submitted in support of the application, QAA will appoint a scrutiny team to test the evidence provided.

On occasion, for example where an application raises specific matters to be addressed, ACDAP may decide to appoint a small team (typically two scrutiny team members) to undertake an exploratory visit and report back to the Committee. Such visits may be coordinated by the ACDAP Committee Secretary or by another QAA officer.

If ACDAP considers that the applicant has not made a case for detailed scrutiny of its application, QAA will advise the relevant government department of this outcome and the latter will advise the applicant accordingly.

## **Detailed scrutiny: Purpose and nature**

The detailed scrutiny is intended to establish that the applicant has the capacity, self-criticality and maturity to be granted taught degree-awarding powers in its own right. It must clearly demonstrate that there can be public confidence, both present and future, in the systems it has established for assuring the quality and standards of taught degrees awarded in its name. In this context, the experience and expertise of staff will be a significant factor in assessing the strength of an application.

The scrutiny team may visit as a team or individually, as appropriate, to test the evidence underpinning the CSA.

A detailed scrutiny typically includes:

- reading and critically evaluating the evidence provided by the applicant
- observation of formal meetings, including meetings of the College Corporation, internal committee meetings, validation/review events, examination boards, and other relevant activities that have a bearing on the application
- structured discussions with staff and students
- consideration of external perspectives on the operation of the applicant through structured discussions with external interest groups, including the applicant's degree validating bodies and external examiners (or their equivalent).

The team's schedule of engagements will reflect the need to produce an evidence-based report for ACDAP's consideration.

## **Preliminary visit by the coordinating officer (CO)**

The CO will contact the applicant to arrange a preliminary visit in preparation for the detailed scrutiny. Typically, this will include discussion of:

- the nature and likely duration of the scrutiny process
- the documentary evidence available in support of the application
- key institutional board and committee meetings, including College Corporation meetings, validation and review events, and undergraduate and postgraduate

- assessment board meetings to be held in the course of the anticipated scrutiny period
- scrutiny team arrangements
- operational considerations.

## Scrutiny team planning meeting

The scrutiny team will hold a planning meeting to:

- review and consider the evidence provided
- establish the means by which the team will test the evidence base, taking account of the criteria to be satisfied. This is likely to involve reviewing additional documentary evidence made available as the scrutiny progresses; meeting groups and individuals identified by the team; observing meetings and other activities pertinent to the application; and team discussions.

## The first scrutiny team visit

Following the scrutiny team's planning meeting and once the team has had an opportunity to review the evidence provided, the team will visit the applicant over a one or two day period, holding meetings with College Corporation members, the College Head, members of the senior management team, academic staff, academic support staff, students, and degree validating body representatives. Depending on timings of events, it is possible that team members may undertake institutional engagement visits individually for observation and/or meeting purposes before the team visit itself.

## Reporting arrangements and visits

Scrutiny team members will complete a report after each institutional engagement they undertake individually. These reports, which are confidential to QAA, will inform the content of the scrutiny team's final report to ACDAP.

The schedule of activities for the period of detailed scrutiny will include provision for meetings between the CO and representatives of the applicant in order to discuss the progress of the scrutiny and to identify any matters where further evidence is required. Typically, such meetings will follow the scrutiny team's progress review meetings, when the team meets as a whole (for example, after one term or semester) to review progress, to establish where gaps in their knowledge base remain, and to agree the next steps in the scrutiny process. At the end of the scrutiny, the scrutiny team may conduct a final visit to the applicant to clarify any areas of uncertainty.

The progress of each scrutiny is monitored and reports are submitted to the quarterly meetings of ACDAP.

## Final report to ACDAP

The detailed scrutiny culminates in a final scrutiny team report to ACDAP, providing peer-referenced analysis of the detail of an application, taking account of the **Guidance** and identifying matters warranting particular consideration by ACDAP. The team does not make a recommendation on the application: this responsibility rests with ACDAP.

In its final report to ACDAP, a scrutiny team is expected to:

- provide clear evidence-based reports and expert advice on how an applicant satisfies or falls short of the criteria
- explain the critical issues
- advise on necessary improvements or changes that might be made to secure a successful outcome of an application.

The applicant will receive the draft report at least five weeks before the relevant ACDAP meeting and will be invited to inform QAA of any factual inaccuracies within two weeks. Following the applicant's response, the report is finalised and is sent to the applicant inviting it to make any further comment for consideration by ACDAP alongside the final report.

## **ACDAP advice to the QAA Board**

ACDAP's advice to the QAA Board is formulated on the basis of the scrutiny team's final report and the Committee's subsequent discussion of the report. Where, in the view of ACDAP, the report raises matters for further consideration or clarification, the Committee may decide to convene a sub-panel of its members to undertake a short and focused visit to the college before formulating its advice to the QAA Board. On occasion, ACDAP may wish to supplement the membership of a sub-panel with additional external expertise. Most sub-panel visits will be of one day's duration and will normally involve meetings with College Corporation members, senior managers, teaching and other staff, students and relevant external interest groups. The visit will result in a further, brief report to ACDAP.

## **QAA advice and notification of final outcome**

When ACDAP has concluded its consideration of an application, it will make a separate report and recommendation which will be submitted to the QAA Board, together with a copy of the scrutiny team's final report. Subject to the approval of the QAA Board, a recommendation is made through the relevant government department constituting QAA's confidential advice to the Privy Council.

Applicants should note that QAA does not make final decisions about applications and the advice that the QAA Board provides to Government has recommendation status only.

When the applicant receives formal notification of the outcome from the Privy Council, it should advise QAA, thereby ensuring that its next QAA review is scheduled well in advance of the date for the renewal of its taught degree-awarding powers.

## **Abeyance**

Where an applicant has provided insufficient evidence to provide ACDAP with the necessary assurance that the relevant guidance and criteria are satisfied, the Committee may recommend that the application be placed into abeyance to enable an applicant to take such developmental action as is necessary, with a view to resuming the scrutiny at a later date. In general, a period of abeyance is not expected to extend beyond two years. However, if an extension beyond this time proves to be necessary, the applicant should contact QAA to discuss the options.

If further evidence is not presented by the end of the abeyance period, ACDAP will take the view that the application has lapsed and will inform the QAA Board accordingly. The QAA Board, in turn, will notify the relevant government department.

## Annex 1 - Key steps: applications for taught degree-awarding powers following on from the grant of Foundation Degree-awarding powers

1	Application submitted to the Privy Council at least five weeks before the Advisory Committee on Degree Awarding Powers (ACDAP) meeting at which the application is to be considered, subject to request by the relevant government department
2	Document upload: applicant uploads information including Critical Self-Analysis and supporting evidence to QAA secure folder
3	Consideration of application by ACDAP
4	Appointment of scrutiny team if ACDAP agrees to proceed to detailed scrutiny
5	Preliminary meeting between the higher education provider and QAA officer at the applicant's premises
6	Team considers documentation remotely
7	QAA informs higher education provider of any further documentation required and confirms schedule of activity, updated as the scrutiny progresses
8	Team makes first visit to the higher education provider (one to two days)
9	Observations/meetings/reading as agreed to test the evidence base
10	Scrutiny team progress review
11	Further observations/meetings/reading as agreed to test the evidence base
12	Scrutiny team progress review/final visit, as appropriate
13	Scrutiny team draft report sent to higher education provider to check for factual accuracy
14	Scrutiny team report finalised and sent to provider inviting any further comments to be considered alongside the final report at ACDAP
15	ACDAP consideration of final scrutiny team report
16	If ACDAP makes a positive recommendation, the QAA Board will consider the application at its next meeting. QAA advice given to the relevant government Minister
17	If a provider has not met the criteria, ACDAP will consider the options. This may include recommending a period of abeyance (if it is feasible for the provider to be better placed to demonstrate that it meets the criteria within a maximum of two years) or advising that the application has not met the criteria. In the case of the latter, the QAA Board will be advised and QAA's advice will then be forwarded to the relevant Minister
18	Review of higher education provider within six years

## Annex 2 - Taught degree-awarding powers: Applicant profile

<b>Taught degree-awarding powers (TDAP): Applicant profile</b>	
To be submitted at the time of application	
<b>Information about the applicant organisation</b>	
Name of applicant organisation:	
Year of establishment:	Year higher education provision started:
Foundation Degree-awarding powers (if granted) approval dates:	
<b>Student/staff population data</b>	
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	
<b>Higher education provision</b> (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 3 - Application for taught-degree awarding powers: Taught degree-awarding powers academic staffing information**

This annex consists of a sample of staffing tables relating to Criterion C, and includes guidance notes. For Annex 3, please see the QAA website:

[www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/FDAP-to-TDAP.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/FDAP-to-TDAP.aspx)

NB: this template is for reference use only, and is an abridged version. If you wish to complete the table, please contact QAA for the full version and for advice on the process.

## Annex 4 - Critical self-analysis criteria mapping template: Taught degree-awarding powers<sup>5</sup>

<b>A. Governance and academic management</b>		
<b>Criterion A1:</b> 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		
<b>Explanation:</b> 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		
<b>Evidence requirement</b>	<b>CSA paragraph and page number</b>	<b>Supporting evidence</b>
The applicant 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 relevant legislation, the UK Academic Infrastructure, 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	
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	

<sup>5</sup> *Applications for the Grant of Taught Degree Awarding Powers, Research Degree Awarding Powers and University Title* (August 2004), [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/32388/11-781-applications-for-degree-awarding-powers-guidance.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/32388/11-781-applications-for-degree-awarding-powers-guidance.pdf)

## B. Academic Standards and Quality Assurance

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		
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<b>B. Academic Standards and Quality Assurance</b>			
<b>Criterion B1:</b> An organisation granted taught degree-awarding powers has in place an appropriate regulatory framework to govern the award of its higher education qualifications			
<b>Explanation:</b> 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') published by the QAA. Organisations that award degrees are required to have in place a comprehensive set of regulations covering these matters			
<b>Evidence requirement</b>		<b>CSA paragraph and page number</b>	<b>Supporting evidence</b>
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		

<b>Criterion B2:</b> 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			
<b>Explanation:</b> 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			
<b>Evidence requirement</b>		<b>CSA paragraph and page number</b>	<b>Supporting evidence</b>
The applicant 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 and statutory bodies		

## B. Academic Standards and Quality Assurance

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

<b>Evidence requirement</b>		<b>CSA paragraph and page number</b>	<b>Supporting evidence</b>
The applicant 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 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.	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		
viii.	through its planning, approval, review and assessment practices, it defines, monitors, reviews and maintains its academic standards		

## B. Academic Standards and Quality Assurance

ix.	its assessment criteria and practices are communicated clearly to students and staff		
x.	its assessment practices fully cover all declared learning objectives, learning outcomes and modes of delivery		
xi.	appropriately qualified external peers are engaged in its assessment processes and that consistency is maintained between internal and external examiners' marking		
xii.	the reliability and validity of its assessment procedures are monitored and that its assessment outcomes inform future programme and student planning		
xiii.	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		

<b>Criterion B4:</b> An organisation granted taught degree-awarding powers takes effective action to promote strengths and respond to identified limitations			
<b>Explanation:</b> 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 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			
<b>Evidence requirement</b>		<b>CSA paragraph and page number</b>	<b>Supporting evidence</b>
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

C. Scholarship and the pedagogical effectiveness of academic staff		
<p><b>Criterion C1:</b> 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</p>		
<p><b>Explanation:</b> 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</p>		
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

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		
<p>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</p>		
Evidence requirement	CSA paragraph and page number	Supporting evidence
The applicant organisation 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, (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	

**QAA 511 01/13**

**The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education**

Southgate House  
Southgate Street  
Gloucester  
GL1 1UB

Tel 01452 557000

Fax 01452 557070

Email [comms@qaa.ac.uk](mailto:comms@qaa.ac.uk)

Web [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)

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