



Guidance for new providers undergoing Quality Review Visit where there are no current or past higher education students

This document sets out the methodological differences to be applied to Quality Review Visits (QRVs) for new providers with no current or past higher education students. It should be read in conjunction with the [Quality Review Visit Handbook](#).¹

The purpose of this document is to:

- explain how the QRV process will be amended for providers with no current or past students
- provide clarification for such providers and their awarding bodies to assist with preparing for, and taking part in, QRVs.

New providers with no current or past higher education students will undergo the same overarching approach to QRV as other providers that have a track record of delivery to higher education students. Unless otherwise stated here, new providers with no current or past higher education students should refer to the details set out in the *Quality Review Visit Handbook* to prepare for and take part in QRV.

The Gateway process set out in HEFCE's [Revised Operating Model for Quality Assessment](#)² is a rigorous test of a provider's readiness to enter the higher education sector. The Gateway is designed to test all providers, whether or not they have a track record of delivering higher education provision to students.

This guidance provides further details about:

- the review approach
- a provider's submission
- the evidence to be submitted
- judgements.

Review approach

In the case of a new provider with no current or past higher education students, the review will test whether a provider, within the context of its agreements with its awarding body or bodies, is appropriately prepared to deliver a high quality student academic experience. In practice, this means that we will assess whether the provider's policies and procedures (some of which might still be under development) are likely to meet the baseline regulatory requirements, even where there may not be evidence to demonstrate how effective these are in practice.

¹ *Quality Review Visit Handbook*, available at: www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/Quality-Review-Visit.aspx.

² Revised Operating Model for Quality Assessment (HEFCE), available at: www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2016/201603/.

Provider submission

The provider's submission should follow the details provided in the *Quality Review Visit Handbook*. It should focus on the extent to which policies and procedures are designed to meet the baseline regulatory requirements, and should demonstrate how the provider can be confident that these policies and procedures will be effective once students are admitted. This is likely to be a theoretical assessment rather than one based on evidence of the practical implementation of policies and procedures.

Evidence

A provider with no current or past higher education students will not be able to provide evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of the practical implementation of its policies and procedures. In the absence of current students, the review team is unable to collect student views to allow the team to assess whether policies and procedures are effectively implemented. The provider's evidence base should refer to the requirements set out in the *Quality Review Visit Handbook* and highlight those items of evidence that can demonstrate the effectiveness of the design of policies and procedures.

A providers with no current or past higher education students might have a body of evidence relating to its delivery of further education provision. Importantly, the team will not draw on evidence about further education provision (level 3 or below), with the exception of any evidence about the strength of leadership and management (for example through Ofsted reports), and will only engage with further education students insofar as arrangements for these are contributing to planned arrangements for higher education and are supporting the establishment of the upcoming higher education provision.

Judgements

Given the reduced volume of evidence available and the fact that the assessment will be made on the basis of the likelihood of effective implementation, the wording of the judgements will be adapted as follows.

- **Confidence/limited confidence/no confidence** in the likelihood that academic standards will be reliable, meet UK expectations and be reasonably comparable with standards set and achieved in other providers in the UK, when students are admitted to the provider.
- **Confidence/limited confidence/no confidence** in the likelihood that the quality of the student academic experience will meet the baseline regulatory requirements when students are admitted to the provider.

A judgement of 'confidence' is deemed a satisfactory outcome for the purposes of the Gateway assessment.

The judgements will be valid for a period of four years, after which a re-review will be scheduled.