

26 May 2022

Dear accountable officer

Implementation of the revised B conditions and the TEF

I am writing to update you on:

- Implementation of our revised B conditions on quality, including the recruitment of academic expert quality assessors.
- Our current thinking about the timeline for implementing the proposed future Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) exercise, and the launch of recruitment for the TEF panel members.

Implementation of the revised B conditions

Our revised ongoing conditions of registration B1, B2 and B4, setting out minimum quality requirements for providers, came into effect on 1 May 2022.

Today we announced that we have opened quality investigations into eight providers. We did this in support of our strategic goal to ensure that students receive a high quality academic experience which improves their knowledge and skills, and with due regard to the guidance to the OfS from the Secretary of State issued in March 2022.¹

The investigations will focus on business and management courses and we will assess whether providers are meeting the minimum quality requirements set out in the revised conditions, for example whether the delivery of courses and assessment is effective, or whether the learning resources and academic support available to students are sufficient. These areas will allow us to explore matters that we know are important to students, such as the contact hours they receive and whether online learning is replacing face-to-face teaching to the detriment of their academic

¹ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/guidance-from-government/.

experience. We expect to publish more information about these investigatory activities later this year.

Recruitment of quality assessors

We are also now inviting academic experts to work with us on these investigations in new assessor roles.² We want to build up a pool of experienced academics who we can call on to help us assess the quality of courses, with our initial focus being on business and management courses. We are looking for experienced academics who are willing and able to challenge established norms where these are not delivering a high quality academic experience for students.

We hope that you will support your academic colleagues to apply for these roles, which will help to drive up the quality of higher education and safeguard the reputation of the sector for high quality courses. This opportunity will enable colleagues from the sector to significantly influence our work. In addition, we are seeking to appoint up to two new fixed-term roles of principal assessor, also advertised from today, who will lead the development of this important new phase of our investigatory work. The deadline for applications for these roles is 24 June 2022.

Update on the TEF

We recently invited consultation responses on a set of proposals for a future TEF. We are considering those responses and expect to communicate our decisions about the scheme in the summer. We will do so alongside our decisions relating to two other consultations: on a new approach to regulating student outcomes and on constructing student outcome and experience indicators for use in OfS regulation.³

We have also been looking at the timetable for implementing the TEF. This has emerged as a key theme in responses to the consultation and we have therefore revised the proposed timetable.⁴ Our current view is that:

- We would extend the timetable for students and providers to make their TEF submissions, with a deadline in early 2023.
- Assessments would then be carried out, with TEF outcomes available in time to inform prospective students for the 2024-25 recruitment cycle.

² See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/get-involved/.

³ Details of all three consultations can be found on the OfS website at: www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/student-outcomes-and-teaching-excellence-consultations/.

⁴ This is a revision to the timetable proposed in the consultation. Please note that this timetable reflects our current revised policy thinking only and is subject to final decisions based on the full set of consultation analysis and outcomes.

Recruitment of the TEF panel

We are now recruiting academic and student members for the proposed TEF panel.⁵ The deadline for applications is 15 July 2022 and we are aiming to appoint the panel in Autumn 2022. Full details about opportunities to become a TEF panel member are available on the OfS website.

TEF next steps

We expect to publish decisions about the TEF consultation proposals, including a final timetable for the implementation of the TEF, in the summer. At that point, we would expect to write to accountable officers asking them to nominate TEF main contacts and TEF student contacts, who the OfS would contact for operational matters relating to providers' and students' participation in the TEF.

Yours sincerely

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⁵ We are inviting panel member applications at this stage to allow sufficient time to recruit and prepare members before any assessments begin. Please note that information about the TEF panel is indicative only and subject to any final decisions we make about the consultation proposals.