

Quality Enhancement
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Handbook - 2019/20

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Introduction

This handbook provides all staff with the essential information and guidance you need to implement the College's Quality Assurance and Enhancement System.

If we are to create and work within a quality culture, we must all strive to understand the factors that affect the quality of the experience we provide to our learners and the services that we offer to support this experience.

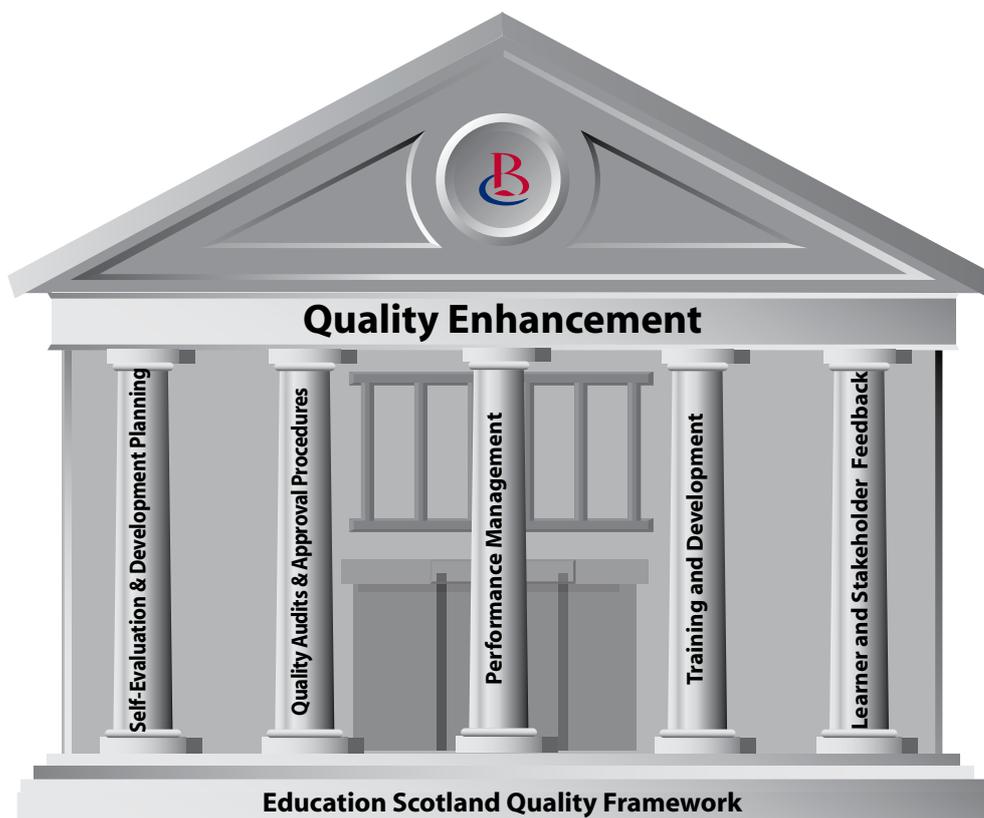
Our approach is straightforward, based on the approach:

Think → Plan → Do → Review

It requires us to understand what we are seeking to achieve, to plan for and take action to improve and enhance the quality of our services. This is the case where our reflection, self-evaluation and evidence sources demonstrate a need for improvement or development and when we identify and seek to build on what we do well.

It is a condition of grant that each college in Scotland takes responsibility for quality assurance and enhancement within its own institution. The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and Education Scotland also have a role to ensure, on behalf of taxpayers and students, that institutional arrangements are effective.

For these reasons, we have designed our Quality procedures to meet the requirements of the SFC and to relate to the Education Scotland quality framework '*How good is our college?*' (HGIOC?)



Borders College Approach

The Borders College [Strategic Plan](#) articulates our [Strategic Purpose, Vision, Values and Behaviours](#).

The Regional Board and the Executive Team, following significant consultation with staff, students, and external stakeholders, develop the Strategic Plan. It guides our approach to quality enhancement and encourages a culture and ethos of quality.

The annual cycle for quality, integrates self-evaluation with enhancement planning and performance management and links back to the Strategic Plan. We set Annual Priorities from the Strategic Plan each year and these, along with the risk register, equality outcomes and the supporting College strategies all inform department, faculty and College-wide enhancement planning.

Our approach to quality enhancement relies on a continuous cycle of monitoring, planning, action and evaluation. This ensures we are able to maintain the standards expected both locally and nationally, and supports us to achieve the goals in our Strategic Plan.



Education Scotland's Quality Framework – How Good is Our College?

[How good is our college?](#) (HGIOC?) is designed to support and enable colleges to evaluate the quality of their provision and services and to report on progress.

It has four high-level principles:

- Leadership and quality culture
- Delivery of learning and services to support learning
- Outcomes and impact
- Capacity for improvement

A challenge question underpins each principle alongside relevant Quality Indicators (QIs), 12 in total.



HOW GOOD IS OUR COLLEGE?

College quality indicators First Edition

What is our capacity for improvement?		
Leadership and quality culture	Delivery of learning and services to support learning	Outcomes and impact
How good is our leadership and approach to improvement?	How good is the quality of the provision and services we deliver?	How good are we at ensuring the best possible outcomes for all our learners?
1.1 Governance and leadership of change 1.2 Leadership of learning and teaching 1.3 Leadership of services to support learning 1.4 Evaluation leading to improvement	2.1 Safeguarding and child protection 2.2 Curriculum 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment 2.4 Services to support learning 2.5 Transitions 2.6 Partnerships	3.1 Wellbeing, equality and inclusion 3.2 Equity, attainment and achievement for all learners



Self-evaluation & Enhancement Planning

We use *HGIOC?* to understand current performance, to identify and reflect on what has worked well and to identify opportunities for improvement. This supports forward planning and decision-making to improve our performance and progress, so we deliver positive impact for our learners.

Education Scotland may choose to focus in on particular QIs in any year, for the College to report on in detail. However, we review against all 12 of the indicators annually, as we use this to inform our Enhancement Plans for the years ahead, and this facilitates our self-awareness of our progress over time.

We involve all areas of the College in the self-evaluation process, with individuals and teams contributing to their departmental Self-evaluation and Enhancement Plan. Teams in each area record strengths and areas for improvement evaluatively, and demonstrate these through evidence, such as PIs, meetings, awards, initiatives etc.

Senior Leadership Team (SLT) take account of all of the departmental Self-evaluation and Enhancement Plans, to create a College Self-evaluation annually that identifies our strengths and areas for improvement and progress, and therefore informs our Enhancement Plans for the next 3 years.

Self-evaluation & Enhancement Plans have several parts, including:

- A narrative providing an overview of the delivery or services provided
- A summary review of progress against the previous year's Enhancement Plan, including any commercial targets, highlighting successes and any outstanding issues or planned developments not achieved
- Evaluation of strengths and areas for improvement, demonstrated through supporting evidence
- An Enhancement Plan identifying key areas for development over the next three years, with associated targets and actions
- Examples of excellent practice that have emerged over the course of the year

We respond to Education Scotland and SFC by using these to inform full Self-evaluation and Enhancement Plan reports when they plan to undertake a full review visit to the College, or progress reports if they intend to undertake a progress report.

For example, in 2019/20, Education Scotland and SFC require a progress report in October and will undertake a progress visit in March 2020, and will require a full Self-evaluation and Enhancement Planning visit process and reports for 2020/21.

We create an annual Self-evaluation and Enhancement Plan schedule.



Managing Organisational & Team Performance

We are committed to ensuring the enhancement of quality across the range of our provision and services. So that we can measure our progress as an organisation, it is important to set targets, to plan to achieve our targets and to monitor our progress against these targets.

Managing College Performance

Each year we set our Annual Priorities, designed to help us meet our goals set in the Strategic Plan. The Regional Board monitors progress against the Annual Priorities each January and July and we develop a new plan at 4-yearly intervals.

As part of the Strategic Plan the Regional Board identified 18 Key [Strategic Indicators](#) for the College, which set the framework for monitoring progress towards our key strategic aims.

Management Performance Review

[Management Performance Reviews](#) (MPR) take place three times a year, usually in mid-October, February and late April-May. Designed to support managers and leaders to meet strategic goals, they provide opportunities for managers to evaluate progress against the actions and targets in their departmental Enhancement Plans.

Managing Course and Team Performance

Within the College our portfolio and curriculum areas use the key Strategic Indicators as the basis for setting targets, looking at the trends in our own performance over a three-year period and benchmarking with the latest sector average performance.

Quality Check Points

We incorporate Quality Check Point topics into standard agendas for monthly [Course Team Meetings](#), which take place throughout the academic year. This ensures we monitor progress and quality within each curriculum area, focussing on specific areas at the appropriate time to ensure consistency across the curriculum.

Block Team Review

Portfolio areas conduct [Block Team Meetings](#) twice a year, usually in January and June. This allows teams to evaluate key performance indicators, review performance against targets and report on progress against their portfolio's annual Enhancement Plan.

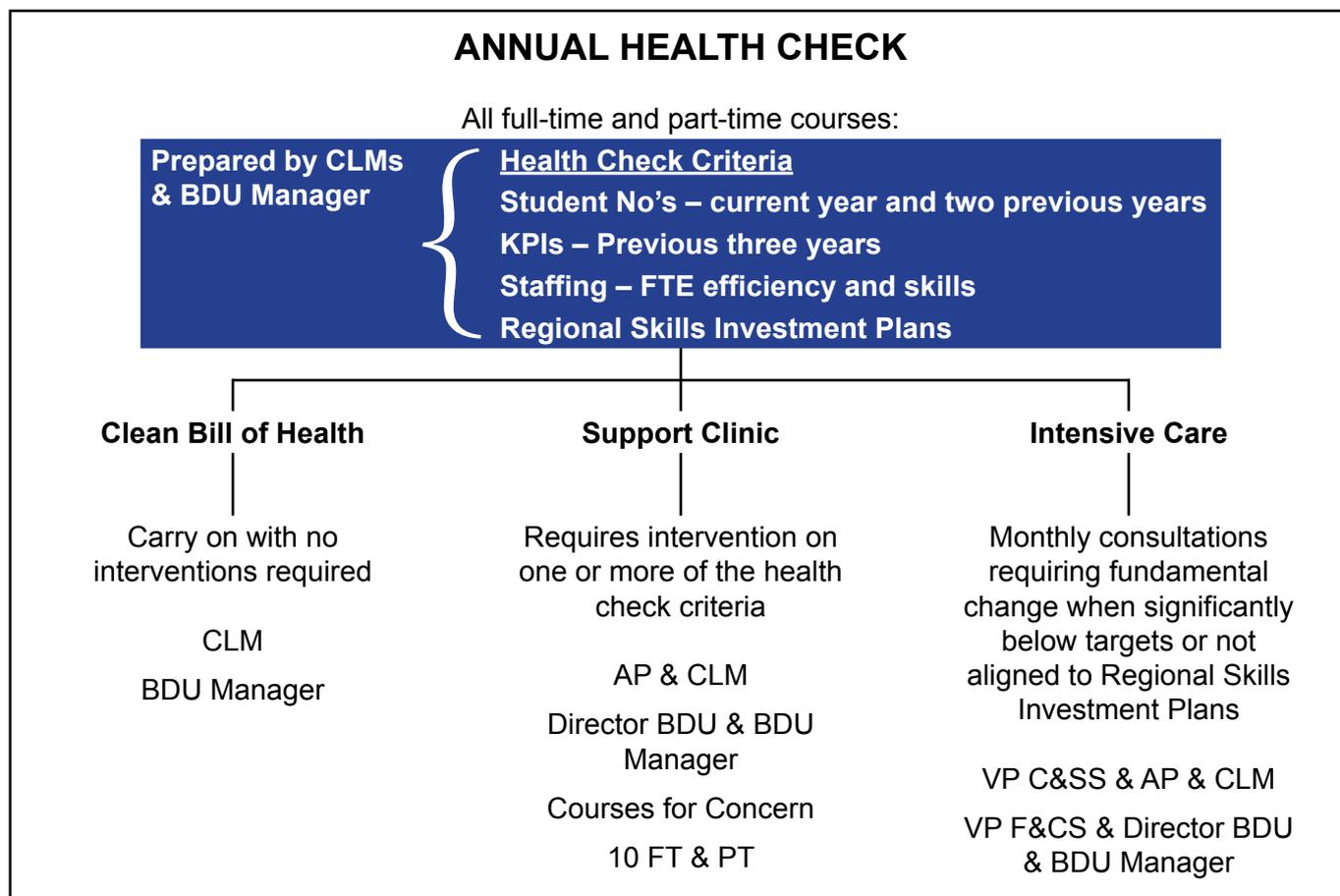
Teams will have had the opportunity to feed into the monthly Quality Check Points, and use this as well as other information, e.g. course tutor reports, Curriculum and Learning Manager (CLM) focus group meetings, as part of the Block Team Review process to support self-evaluation and share good practice, highlight emerging strengths and areas for improvement.

Teams evaluate learner feedback and prepare necessary reports for the Student Experience Committee (SEC) on planned actions as a result.



Annual Health Check

Annually, we review all full-time and part-time courses, to ensure that they remain in demand, viable and sustainable. We look at a range of factors to determine which courses may require some intervention to support improvement, and focus on ten courses for maximum impact. Where it is evident that an area of delivery requires more intensive care we monitor it monthly to bring about fundamental change.



Managing Individual Performance

Between June and September, as an individual member, we each have our annual [Staff Performance & Development Review](#) (SPDR).

Our staff are our most valuable resource, therefore supporting and developing staff to enable effective performance of their job roles, is a priority.

Rights and Responsibilities

- Each employee has a **right** to a regular meeting with their line manager to discuss their job role, their performance and their training needs
- Each employee has a **responsibility** to engage in the process to ensure benefits for themselves and the organisation

And

- An employer has a **right** to discuss performance of job roles with employees to ensure and enhance the quality of provision of services to customers (learners) and the success of the organisation
- An employer has a **responsibility** to support and develop staff to enable them to perform their job roles effectively

The purpose of the SPDR meeting is to enable a meaningful discussion to take place between the manager and the individual member of staff, therefore we structure it around key elements:

- discussion of the issues raised by the reviewee in their preparation document
- assessment of performance in relation to criteria appropriate to the job role
- review of performance against previously agreed targets
- agreement of appropriate individual targets for the next period that are [SMART](#) and set at an appropriate time within the year
- discussion which identifies training needs and opportunities

We are looking at introducing interim SPDR meetings during the course of 2019/20.

Training and Development

Training and Development, and Continuing Professional Development for all staff are a priority for us, playing a significant role in achieving our objectives for quality improvement. We provide an annual programme of Training and Development opportunities, prepared in response to individual and College needs identified, for example, through SPDRs and the College self-evaluation process.



Validation & Approval of Delivery

Borders College is an Approved Centre to run SQA and other awarding body provision. This means we have a responsibility to ensure that all our provision is valid, viable and able to meet the needs of our learners and meets awarding body standards.

The SLT must internally approve all assessed units and awards, to ensure that they meet with our [Curriculum Strategy](#), internal and external requirements. Where a curriculum area wishes to deliver a new award, offer a replacement award or make a minor adjustment to an award, our [Approval Procedure](#) sets out team member responsibilities in detail and is supported by the [Curriculum Planning and Review Process](#) (incorporating design guidance) and other [supplementary guidance and forms](#).

The procedure requires the CLM to make a costed proposal with the associated documentation to demonstrate the demand, viability and sustainability of the award to an Approvals Committee, which can require an Approvals Panel to examine the proposal in more detail, and which makes recommendations to SLT.

[Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework \(SCQF\) and Credit Rating](#)

The College will develop, credit rate and level locally-devised awards only where there is no equivalent award available through a nationally recognised awarding body. The details of our approach are in [SCQF Credit Rating – Procedures for Creating and Validating Awards](#) which follows the SCQF requirements.

Based on the main programmes and qualifications that characterise the Scottish Education and Training System, the SCQF has 12 levels, ranging from National 1 qualifications and SQA Awards at SCQF Level 1 to Doctorates at SCQF Level 12. Further detail is available in an [interactive version of the framework](#). We achieve credit rating through matching the expected outcomes of an award with the characteristics described in the generic level descriptors provided within the SCQF.

The SCQF partnership permits us to credit rate our own provision, however, whilst we have credit-rated rate third party provision in the past, this is not something we do currently.



Internal & External Verification

Borders College is an Approved Centre to run SQA and other awarding body provision. This means we have a responsibility to ensure that all provision is valid, approved and assessed to the national standard of the relevant awarding body.

We manage the quality of our delivery internally through Internal Verification, and the awarding bodies check this through External Verification. Our [Internal and External Verification Policy and Procedure](#) set out team member responsibilities in detail and are supported by [supplementary guidance and forms](#).

Internal Verification – Summary

- Staff in each area of the curriculum have to be suitably trained, subject competent and experienced Internal Verifiers (IV)
- CLMs manage and coordinate the process in conjunction with Lead Internal Verifiers, using a sampling plan
- The Internal Verifier is responsible for ensuring that the assessment material meets the requirements of the awarding body
- If the Internal Verifier is dissatisfied with assessment material, they return the material to the Assessor along with a feedback form, detailing action to be carried out within a set timescale
- If the Internal Verifier remains dissatisfied after the action taken by the Assessor, a “not accepted” decision formally puts a hold on delivery, with feedback detailing the action required to lift the decision
- Once that action is taken, and the material “accepted” it can be used in delivery
- All new assessments are internally verified, then students work is internally verified on specific criteria and sampled

Awarding bodies, by arrangement with us, periodically visit subject areas and externally verify learner work; in some cases, they request us to send samples of student work to them. This ensures that we meet the awarding body’s standards and ensures maintenance of national standards.

External Verification – Common Features

- External Verifiers (EV) contact our Quality Assurance Coordinator (QAC) to arrange a timeframe for the visit, agreed with the CLM following discussion with Lead Internal Verifier, Internal Verifier and Assessor
- Relevant assessment materials are gathered in advance; we arrange to have both Assessors and Verifiers available for interview and a small group of candidates if requested in the visit plan
- For SVQs, portfolio areas are required to supply the complete list of candidates, their stage of completion, and the names of the Assessors and Internal Verifiers involved in the assessment and quality assurance process
- The External Verifier gives oral feedback to the CLM at the end of the visit, detailing any development points or identified good practice
- The awarding body provides a written report on the outcome of the external verification event outlining their findings, good practice and any areas for improvement
- If the External Verifier finds a serious flaw in our assessment and verification of an award, they will apply a sanction; this is often a “not accepted” decision on certification, which means we cannot certify until this decision is formally lifted once we have taken the remedial action stated in the report
- Sanctions can have serious implications for us as a College, so it is important to ensure that action taken is timely and appropriate



Quality Audits

We carry out internal quality audits through the year, supported by [guidance and forms](#).

Internal Verification Audit

The Internal Verification Audit enables us to sample our approach to internal verification, to ensure that we are carrying these out consistently and to an appropriate standard. This enables us to address and rectify any issues internally quickly before an external verifier identifies a problem.

Learning & Teaching Audit

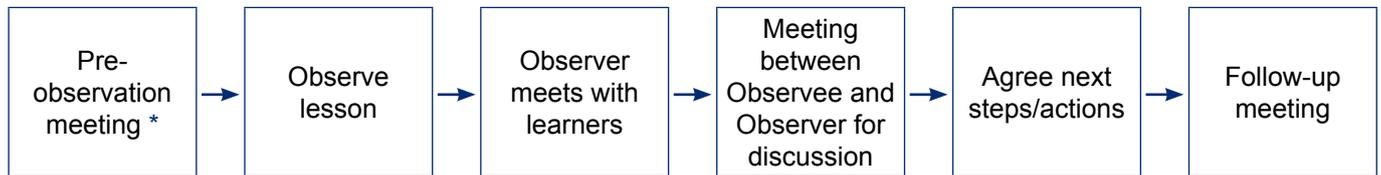
The Learning & Teaching Audit enables us to sample our approach to learning and teaching materials, again to ensure consistency of standards of approach and that a range of appropriate engaging materials are being used.



Learning & Teaching Observations

One of the methods through which we can support the direction of our [Learning and Teaching Strategy](#) and assess the quality of teaching and learning is [Learning & Teaching Observations](#).

The Observations process



* Pre observation meeting – this can be completed as a one to one meeting, telephone call, or even a chat through email

Our Learning & Teaching Enhancement Specialists (LTES) carry out an annual programme of observations that are developmental in approach, the lecturer and the observer working together to support the Lecturer to review and evaluate their own teaching practice. There is an opportunity for professional dialogue before the observation takes place.

Learners are involved in the process giving feedback on the lesson. The LTES and the Lecturer meet soon after the observation to discuss and mutually agree next steps or actions, and there is a further follow-up meeting to discuss progress.

As well as being a supportive opportunity for lecturing staff, the observations enable the LTES to identify common themes arising out of them, which in turn generate wider training and development opportunities.



Learner Engagement

We aim to ensure meaningful learner engagement, to understand more about their learning and teaching needs and learners' perceptions of our delivery.

[Borders College Students' Association](#) (BCSA) established a Student Experience Committee (SEC) in 2018. This is at the core of student engagement and feedback. A team of Lead Reps work with BCSA to collate student feedback on a range of student experience themes from their curriculum area. The SEC system focusses on collecting feedback at a higher level, enabling the College to identify and monitor issues that are representative of the broader student experience. Aligned with 'HGIOC?' this feedback is shared at quarterly SEC meetings.

Designed to improve efficiency by reducing the number of meetings, the SEC approach also ensures relevant managers are present to facilitate swifter resolution of issues. Lead and Class Reps work with classmates to improve communication between students and staff on day-to-day learning and teaching issues. The additional responsibility placed on Lead Reps for co-ordination and representation is intended to build a group of engaged student representatives who work regularly with BCSA to improve the student experience within their curriculum area.

Learner Feedback on Curriculum

We collect learner feedback on the curriculum, evaluating at unit and course level, and support this process with a range of materials.

We also use a range of other mechanisms to collect feedback such as the Annual Learner Survey and Campus User Groups. More detail is available in our Learner Feedback Approach.

Stakeholder Engagement

We aim to ensure meaningful stakeholder engagement, to understand more about their needs and stakeholders' perceptions of our delivery.

More detail is available in our [Employer Engagement Strategy](#).



Related Documents and Information

Where related documents are available on our website or intranet, we have provided a hyperlink to these.

Where relevant we have included links to some external websites; the responsibility for accuracy (content, accessibility etc.) rests with the external website.

