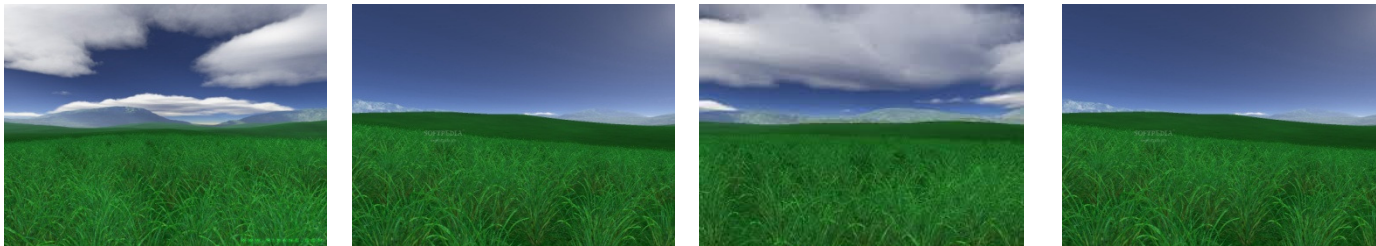


# RISK MANAGEMENT: IMPLEMENTATION

Anthony McClaran  
Chief Executive, QAA

Friday 12 October 2012



**QAA**

## Presentation

- i) Update on QAA
- ii) Background to a more risk-based approach to quality assurance in England
- iii) Current consultation
- v) The QAA viewpoint
- vi) Next steps & issues for consideration



# ABOUT QAA



QAA was established in 1997

Purpose: to assure standards and improve the quality of UK higher education

Offices in England, Scotland & (shortly) Wales

Around 170 staff and 750 reviewers



# MAIN UK ACTIVITIES OF QAA

Some of QAA's main UK activities today:

- **Review and audit programmes** for universities, further education colleges and private providers
- Adviser to Privy Council on applications for **degree-awarding powers and university title**
- Provider of **Educational Oversight**, on behalf of UK Border Agency, for 'Highly Trusted Sponsor' status for independent institutions with overseas students
- ***UK Quality Code for Higher Education***



BACKGROUND TO A MORE RISK-BASED  
APPROACH TO QUALITY ASSURANCE  
IN ENGLAND





Northern Ireland  
Assembly

Northern  
Ireland

Scotland



The Scottish  
Government



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Wales

England



**QAA**



**White Paper:**  
*Students at the Heart of the System (June 2011)*

**Technical Consultation:**  
*A New Fit-for-Purpose Regulatory Framework for  
the Higher Education Sector (August 2011)*



*“ ...our proposals for a diverse and responsive sector and a **proportionate, risk-based approach to regulation** which protects and promotes the interests of students and taxpayers, while keeping bureaucracy to a minimum and looking to find areas of regulation that can be improved, reduced or removed.”*

BIS Technical Consultation (August 2011)





# TEQSA, AUSTRALIA



**Australian Government**  

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**Tertiary Education Quality  
and Standards Agency**

- New Australian agency – commenced work in January 2012
- Remit: to register and evaluate the performance of HE providers
- Adopted a risk-based approach – published in its *Regulatory Risk Framework*
- Three priority risk areas:
  - Risk to students
  - Risk of provider collapse
  - Risk to sector reputation



*“The consultation has reinforced our view that a risk-based approach is the most desirable means of regulating higher education in England.”*

BIS statement (June 2012)

**BIS**  

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**Department for  
Business Innovation  
& Skills**



HEFCE CONSULTATION ON  
RISK-BASED QUALITY ASSURANCE IN  
ENGLAND



# ABOUT THE CONSULTATION

- *A Risk-Based Approach to Quality Assurance*
- Conducted by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)
- QAA acted as expert advisers to HEFCE
- The consultation proposes changes to the:
  - Nature
  - Frequency
  - Intensity of QAA's engagement with institutions
- Consultation opened May and closed July 2012



**QAA**

*“Our intention is to move to a lighter-touch approach where track record and type of provision warrant such a change.*

*We propose that our guidance to the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), following the consultation, will direct attention and effort where it will have the most benefit in the development, enhancement and protection of quality and standards.”*

From the HEFCE consultation document, *A Risk-Based Approach to Quality Assurance* (May 2012)



# KEY PRINCIPLES

The proposed approach is based on three key principles:

- i) Retaining a universal system which continues to promote enhancement
- ii) Robust and rigorous approach
- iii) Prominent role for students in quality assurance



# SCOPE OF THE HEFCE CONSULTATION

Varying nature, frequency & intensity of reviews

Risk 'triggers', concerns and out-of-cycle interventions

The role of enhancement

Student engagement in quality assurance

Data sources and information

'Core' and 'module' approach



**QAA**

# THE QAA VIEWPOINT





# QAA VIEWPOINT



QAA welcomes the principles of:

- A universal approach
- Enhancement
- Retaining Institutional Review
- Recognition of wider UK & international context



# QAA RESPONSE

QAA response highlighted:

- Maximum interval between reviews
- Variable versus fixed intervals
- Greater focus on governance and management
- Student protection



# THE 'QUALITY ASSURANCE TOOLKIT'

TODAY

Periodic  
Reviews

Thematic  
Reviews

Special  
Investigations



**QAA**

# THE 'QUALITY ASSURANCE TOOLKIT'

FUTURE

Periodic  
Reviews

Thematic  
Reviews

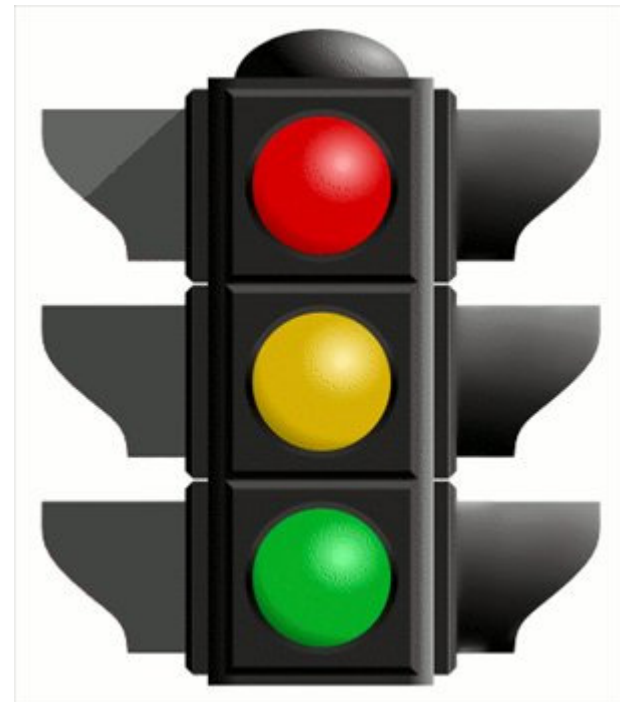
Special  
Investigations



**QAA**

# QAA CONCERNS SCHEME

- Investigating concerns about standards and quality raised by:
  - Students
  - Staff
  - Other parties
- Focused on systemic or procedural problems
- Public reports published on outcomes of investigations



# NEXT STEPS & ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION



# PROVISIONAL TIMETABLE

| Date                | Activity   |
|---------------------|--|
| Nov 2012            | HEFCE publishes response to the consultation<br><br>QAA produces draft <i>Operational Description and Handbook</i> |
| Dec 2012 – Feb 2013 | QAA holds consultation on <i>Operational Description and Handbook</i>  |
| March 2013          | <i>Handbook</i> published  |
| May 2013 onwards    | Institutional briefings begin on the revised method<br><br>Reviewer training begins                                |
| Sept 2013           | Implementation of the new method   |
| Jan 2014            | First reviews begin, under the new method  |



# ISSUES & CHALLENGES

- *How* do we define risk?
- *Who* defines risk?
- 'Risk' as a self-fulfilling prophecy
- 'Risk' as a positive as well as a negative
- Managing the move from *equal* to *risk-based* treatment of institutions
- Changing role of reviewers (experts versus peers)
- Defining the scope of risk-based review:
  - Governance?
  - Management?
  - Finance?





# REGULATORY PARTNERSHIP GROUP FOR ENGLAND



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

