



QAA

IQEER

Integrated quality and enhancement review

**Supplementary guidelines on preparing
the self-evaluation for Developmental
engagement in student assessment**

Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review (IQER)

Supplementary guidelines on preparing the self-evaluation for Developmental engagement in student assessment

1 The self-evaluation is a fundamental document for the Developmental engagement stage of IQER. The primary source of information for preparing the self-evaluation is *The handbook for Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review* (Section 6, paragraphs 103-109), published by QAA. However, the following supplementary notes, based on feedback from college staff and the reviewers who have been through this first stage of the review process, may be useful.

Purpose

2 The purpose of the self-evaluation is to describe the responsibilities which the college has within the area of student assessment*, making reference to its agreements with awarding bodies, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the processes and procedures it has adopted for discharging these responsibilities. The self-evaluation also provides the opportunity for critical self-reflection on the effectiveness of these processes and procedures. An effective self-evaluation is key to the college gaining substantial benefit from IQER and to the smooth running of both the Developmental engagement and the Summative review. QAA therefore encourages colleges to give its preparation due time and attention.

Content

3 The self-evaluation typically takes the form of a short commentary (four pages) which signposts and contextualises a portfolio of existing evidence, for example, the college's assessment policy, sample programme specifications and action plans arising from internal or external reviews. The portfolio is the evidence base for responding to the lines of enquiry; it should be clearly referenced to the self-evaluation commentary and the college must provide a numbered master list of the supporting documentation.

Structure

4 There is no prescribed structure for the self-evaluation, but clear indicative content is provided in the handbook (page 43). The self-evaluation must address the lines of enquiry and demonstrate how they will provide evidence for the Developmental engagement team to evaluate the core themes. The lines of enquiry therefore provide natural headings for the main body of the commentary. A summary, comprising strengths and areas for development of assessment processes and practice is useful, as it provides indicators of potential good practice and recommendations to be followed up in the Developmental engagement.

Selecting lines of enquiry

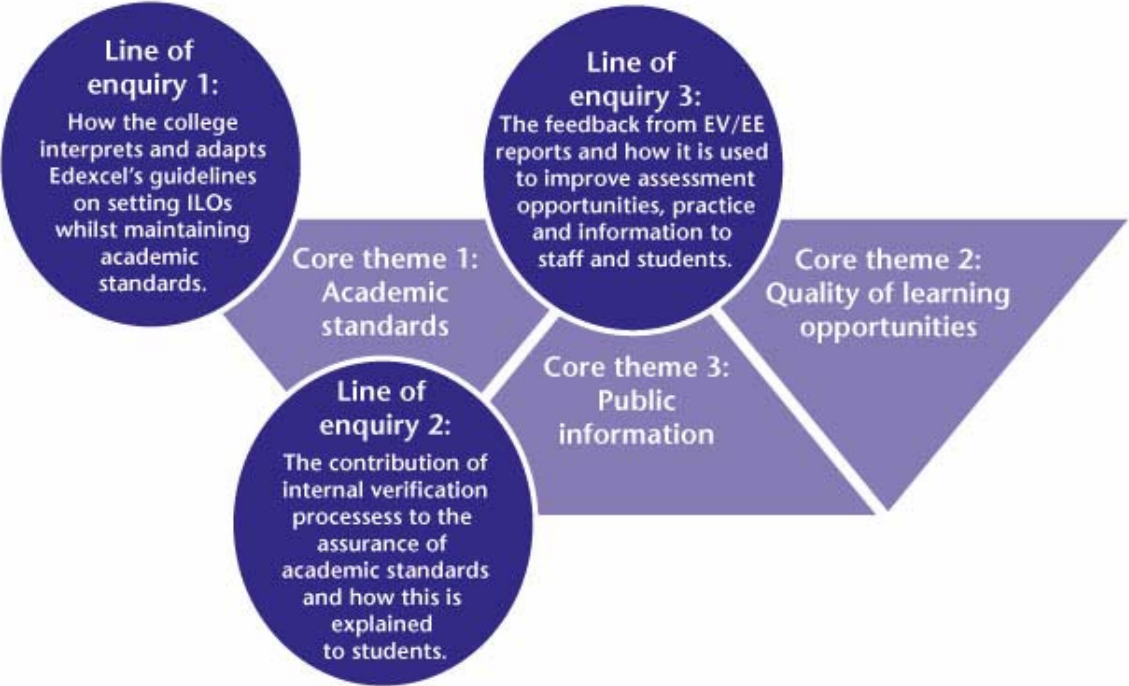
5 Lines of enquiry must be focused on the theme of student assessment. It is important to remember that lines of enquiry should identify areas which will help the college to develop its HEFCE-funded provision for the benefit of its students.

6 Colleges will usually find that their internal quality assurance mechanisms reveal the areas that might benefit from scrutiny by the Developmental engagement team. Other points of reference for assisting in identifying lines of enquiry are the Academic Infrastructure (particularly the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education, Section 6: Assessment of students*) and external examiner reports.

7 Limiting the lines of enquiry to three should allow for a sufficiently thorough examination of each. Colleges might choose one line of enquiry which will highlight good

practice and use the others to identify areas for development, or they might choose three lines of enquiry which will focus on both development and good practice.

8 Whichever permutation is chosen, a line of enquiry may deal with one core theme or touch on more than one, as illustrated in the diagram below.



ILO – Intended learning outcome
 EV – External verifier
 EE – External examiner

9 Careful consideration should be given to ensuring that all three core themes can be adequately addressed and a matrix approach may be helpful in achieving this:

Examples of lines of enquiry	Academic standards	Quality of learning opportunities	Public information
1 The college's processes and procedures for external examining	√		√
2 The use of assessment data to secure standards and identify ways of enhancing learning opportunities	√	√	
3 The contribution of work placements to the quality of learning opportunities and what the college says about work placements in its published information		√	√

10 Lines of enquiry should be expressed as simple, self-contained statements, as in the six examples above, rather than as questions which appear to invite a particular response, as in the example below:

What specific contribution do relevant work placements make to the quality of learning opportunities?

Equally, lines of enquiry should not be vague:

How good is the college's public information?

11 Lines of enquiry have to be approved by the IQER coordinator and QAA before they can be used as the basis of the Developmental engagement enquiries. As a member of the review team, the coordinator will help the college to identify and shape the lines of enquiry.

Evaluative commentary

12 The commentary on the lines of enquiry should reflect the college's capacity for critical self-reflection on the effectiveness of its processes and procedures for managing higher education. One effective approach would be to provide an opening statement containing a judgement, then qualify it with supporting evidence, for example:

There is a comprehensive, but insufficiently differentiated Assessment Policy (item 1). It deals with all aspects of assessment from diagnostic testing to the appeals procedure and describes the responsibilities of key members of staff in detail, but is generic in its application to all of the College's provision.

Such a statement would typically be followed by a clear indication of what is being done to address an area identified for development, for example:

The College's Quality Manager is currently reviewing the policy and a revised version, with sections specific to higher education and aligned to its higher education institution partner requirements, will be available from the start of the new academic year.

Drafting

13 Circulating the draft self-evaluation to higher education students, staff and awarding body representatives for comment widens the perspective and helps to keep colleagues informed and engaged in the process. Ideally, the document should be owned by many, but read as one voice.

Submission

14 The self-evaluation should be sent to the Logistics and Deployment contact at QAA 12 weeks before the start of the visit. One electronic and three hard copies should be provided. Colleges are asked to use a CD-ROM or data stick, with the self-evaluation as a Word file, and not to email individual files to QAA**. QAA cannot return any electronic storage devices to the college until the whole IQER process has been completed.

15 QAA will send a copy to the coordinator asking for confirmation of whether the self-evaluation forms an appropriate basis for the review. Once this has been agreed, QAA will notify the college and ask for copies of the self-evaluation to be sent to the team.

16 QAA may return the self-evaluation to the college for further work if it does not enable the team to identify the college's responsibilities and understand how these responsibilities

are discharged. In these circumstances, the QAA review support officer will provide the college with advice.

Advice

17 For further help and advice with the self-evaluation, please refer to the guidance in the IQER handbook.

18 If you need advice before you are notified of your coordinator, please contact Ian Welch (01452 557032, i.welch@qaa.ac.uk) or Rachael Gee (01452 557120, r.gee@qaa.ac.uk) at QAA in the first instance. Once you have the details of your coordinator, please contact him/her directly.

Notes

*If a college has more than one Developmental engagement, then the College, in discussion with its awarding body(ies), may choose the theme of the second and devise the lines of enquiry accordingly.

**Email may be used for supplementary documents sent after the initial mailing.