

Education Quality Enhancement Cycle Procedure

Purpose

1. This procedure covers essential information for implementing the Education Quality Enhancement Cycle (EQEC). It should be read in conjunction with the EQEC Policy.

Scope

2. The scope of the procedure is defined within the EQEC Policy.

Definitions

3. **Award Gaps:** the difference between the proportion of students from a given demographic group and that of a relevant comparator group who have positive outcomes in relation to Continuation, Completion, Awarding or Progression.
 4. **Common Aggregation Hierarchy (CAH):** a national higher education subject classification system based upon three levels of granularity.
 5. **Completion rates:** the proportions of students who gained a higher education qualification (or continued in the study of a qualification) four years and 15 days after they started their programme (or six years and 15 days for part-time students).
 6. **Continuation rates:** the proportion of students continuing in the study of a higher education qualification (or having gained a qualification) one year and 15 days after they started their programme (or two years 15 days for part-time students)
 7. **Degree Outcomes:** the distribution of degree awards.
 8. **Experience Gaps:** the difference between the proportion of students from a given demographic group and that of a relevant comparator group who have positive experiences as informed by the National Student Survey.
 9. **Graduate Outcomes Survey:** an annual survey to understand the perspectives and current employment status of graduates 15 months after they are awarded a qualification.
 10. **National Student Survey:** an annually administered survey undertaken by Ipsos on behalf of the Office for Students (OfS), that all UK publicly-funded higher education institutions must engage with, the results of which are used by the OfS to measure the student experience.
 11. **OfS B Conditions of Registration:** a set of regulatory requirements relating to educational provision and the student learning experience that all registered higher education institutions in England must meet to ensure baseline quality and academic standards.
 12. **OfS Benchmarking:** a term used by the OfS to describe the approach they use to make meaningful comparisons between the student experience offered by, and the outcomes achieved in, different higher education providers in England. It accounts for differences between student groups and providers by determining a sector average against a particular parameter and then adjusting (weighting) this average for each group based upon the characteristics of the students in that group or the provision being offered.
 13. **OfS Thresholds:** the baseline regulatory thresholds for universities to minimally achieve in relation to student outcomes (continuation, completion, progression).
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14. **Progression rates:** the proportion of qualifiers that identify managerial or professional employment, further study or other positive outcomes 15 months after they left higher education.
15. **Subject Area:** Subject Area refers to a subject grouping defined by the Common Aggregation Hierarchy (CAH). The CAH groups different subject areas according to three levels, where CAH1 is the least detailed and CAH3 the most detailed.
16. **Teaching Excellence Framework:** The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) is a national scheme run by the OfS that assesses and rates higher education providers in England above a set of minimum requirements for quality and standards.

Exceptions

17. As per the EQEC Policy.

EQEC Procedures statement

EQEC Evidence

18. The EQEC is an evidence-based process, and schools/departments are expected to analyse evidence sets that provide insight into educational quality, the student learning experience and student outcomes.
19. EQEC core evidence will comprise both quantitative and qualitative data, including:
 - a. National Student Survey results (UG);
 - b. University of York programme, stage and module evaluation data (UG, PGT);
 - c. Continuation data (UG);
 - d. Completion data (UG);
 - e. Graduate Outcomes Survey data, including progression data (UG and PGT);
 - f. Degree outcomes (UG and PGT);
 - g. Award Gaps data;
 - h. Student Experience (NSS) Gaps data (UG);
 - i. Attendance (check-in) data (UG and PGT);
 - j. External Examiner reports (UG and PGT);
 - k. PSRB report where appropriate (UG and PGT).
20. The presentation of this evidence will be aligned to the Office for Students (OfS) Conditions of Registration B1 to B5 relating to quality and standards.
21. Different components of EQEC evidence will be presented at different levels of granularity, depending upon how the University collects or receives that evidence. These levels will typically be at one or a combination of:
 - a. A module of study.
 - b. A programme of study.
 - c. Common Aggregation Hierarchy (CAH) Level 2 or Level 3 (appendix 1).
 - d. The school/department.
22. Where possible, quantitative EQEC evidence will be presented in a way that allows for comparison analysis. Comparison evidence will include one or more of the following:
 - a. Sector ranking: where the York data sits in relation to the data of equivalent external providers.

- b. Sector quartile: in which sector quartile the York data is located.
- c. Russell Group quartile: for degree outcomes only, York data is positioned by quartile against Russell Group institutions.
- d. OfS benchmarking: how the York data compares to an OfS benchmark figure, where anything within +/- 2.4pp of the benchmark figure is considered in-line with benchmark, anything ≥ 2.5 pp above benchmark is considered 'materially above' benchmark, and anything ≤ 2.5 pp below benchmark is considered 'materially below' benchmark.
- e. OfS threshold: in relation to student outcomes data only (appendix 2). Any positivity indicator that falls below the threshold score should be considered as not being compliant with regulatory standards.

23. The majority of the core EQEC evidence will be provided through a dedicated Tableau EQEC workbook [\[see Guidance\]](#), although for specific evidence schools/departments will be directed to other sources.

24. Student engagement (check-in) data is updated continuously. Other EQEC core evidence is updated at different times in the year. Under normal circumstances the schedule of evidence update will be as follows:

Evidence Updates	Updating Timing												B Conditions				
	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5
Graduate Outcomes															✓		
National Student Survey													✓	✓		✓	
UG Ex. Ex. Reports																	✓
Progression Data															✓		
PGT Stage/Prog. Evaluation															✓		
SS PGT Module Evaluation													✓	✓		✓	
PGT Programme Evaluation													✓	✓		✓	
Continuation Data															✓		
Completion Data															✓		
Degree Outcomes (internal)															✓		
Award Gap Data															✓		
PGT Ex. Ex. Reports																	✓
S1 Module Evaluation													✓	✓		✓	
Degree Outcomes(external)															✓		
S2 Module Evaluation													✓	✓		✓	
UG Stage/Prog. Evaluation													✓	✓		✓	

25. School/department EQEC leads will be notified by Academic Quality and Development (AQD) when updated evidence becomes available for analysis.

26. Although schools/departments must engage with all the core EQEC evidence, or as much of it as is available to them, in some instances they may wish to explore particular evidence in more detail. In the event that there are additional Tableau workbooks that allow this, links will be provided.
27. Schools/departments are also welcome to expand their analysis into consideration of evidence they hold locally that is not part of the core EQEC evidence set.

Institutional Framing of EQEC

28. On an annual basis, University Education Committee (UEC) will agree key educational priorities that schools/departments must consider in their analysis of the EQEC evidence. These priorities do not replace priorities that schools/departments themselves identify through analysis of their specific data, but in considering action planning (section 34b) they should be reviewed alongside school/department priorities.
29. On an annual basis AQD will coordinate a review of school/department evidence sets, identifying areas of strength and areas for enhancement. Faculty Associate Deans for Education and Students (ADs ES) will review these strengths and areas for enhancement before they are forwarded to school/department EQEC leads. As part of the EQEC process, schools/departments should identify actions to address those areas that require enhancement.
30. In reviewing school/department evidence sets, AQD will assign schools/departments a rating against B Conditions 1, 2, and 4, and for the individual components of B Condition 3. B Condition 5 will not be rated. Ratings will be set at the level of CAH2. Two sets of ratings will be provided:
 - a. A rating for the current EQEC year;
 - b. A cumulative rating for the previous four years (where possible) to replicate the TEF process.
31. The rating will be based upon consideration of a subset of the core EQEC quantitative data that the OfS use to evaluate performance:

B1: Academic Experience	NSS questions relating to the themes: • Teaching on my course. • Learning opportunities.
B2: Resources, Support and Student Engagement	NSS questions relating to the themes: • Academic Support. • Learning Resources. • Student Voice.
B3: Student Outcomes (Continuation)	Continuation data
B3: Student Outcomes (Completion)	Completion data
B3: Student Outcomes (Progression)	Progression data
B4: Assessment and Awards	NSS questions relating to the theme: • Assessment and Feedback.

32. Ratings will be based upon OfS benchmark data, which OfS TEF panels use to determine TEF ratings. In the cases of B1 and B2, ratings will be calculated by comparing the average of the overall positivity indicator scores for the combined NSS themes with the average benchmark score for those combined themes. Ratings will be assigned as follows:

Exceeding	Where the positivity indicator is ≥ 2.5 pp above the benchmark value.
In-line	Where the positivity indicator is between -2.4pp and +2.4pp from the

	benchmark value.
Requiring Enhancement	Where the positivity indicator is ≤ 2.5 pp below benchmark.
Insufficient Evidence	Where a positivity indicator or benchmark score is not available.

33. The ratings are intended to provide schools/departments with an additional indicator of where their performance against different B Conditions is located, rather than as an absolute judgement of performance. Schools/departments will be able to contextualise their ratings with additional information where appropriate (section 35).

School/department engagement with EQEC

34. Schools/departments will complete an annual submission, using their *EQEC Annual Submission* template, located in the *Education Quality and Enhancement Cycle* shared Google Folder, by the specified deadline (section 47). The annual submission requires schools/departments to:
- Reflect upon progress made in relation to actions previously identified and recorded on the *EQEC Action Plan* template.
 - Reflect upon school/department performance in relation to institutional priorities.
 - Reflect upon performance against each B Condition, informed by the AQD summary of strengths and areas for enhancement, school/department B Condition ratings, and their analysis of the available EQEC evidence.
 - Update actions they are undertaking to enhance performance on the *EQEC Action Plan* template.
35. It is important in relation to all reflections that schools/departments contextualise their data and provide insights into why performance in some areas may be strong, and why performance in other areas may require enhancement.
36. It will be the responsibility of the EQEC Lead to coordinate completion of the EQEC annual return within the school/department, including implementing appropriate consultation with staff and students, drafting the EQEC annual return, and securing school/department senior management approval before the submission date.
37. Schools/departments must engage in the process of continuous action planning, review and evaluation using their *EQEC Action Plan* template, located in the *Education Quality and Enhancement Cycle* shared Google Folder. Action planning will include:
- Identifying key enhancement themes and the EQEC evidence that highlights particular issues.
 - Setting objectives for the enhancement of practice and the specific actions and activities that will be undertaken to meet those objectives.
 - Assigning responsibility for actions to named individuals and indicating the timescales for actions to be undertaken.
 - Identifying how impact will be evaluated and what support may be needed.
38. At the start of each academic year, AQD will duplicate the action plan from the previous year and label the duplicate for the forthcoming academic year. Schools/departments must:
- Review and update the new action plan, delete any actions that are complete, whilst adding in any new actions that have been identified.
 - When key EQEC evidence is updated (section 24), review their action plans and consider whether new or adjusted actions are necessary.

- c. Update their actions plan as and when appropriate in response to the release of new evidence, and to record progress made in relation to ongoing actions.
39. It will be the responsibility of the EQEC Lead to ensure the EQEC Action Plan is maintained in line with the expectations of sections 37 and 38.

Support for schools/departments undertaking EQEC

- 40. Throughout the year, ADs ES will discuss with school/department leads their EQEC evidence, exploring areas of strength and clarifying actions that are being undertaken to address areas that require enhancement. These meetings will also allow ADs ES to consider whether there are particular challenges common to multiple schools/departments that may warrant faculty level consideration and which will be addressed through faculty level initiatives. EQEC will receive substantive discussion time during at least one FEC meeting per semester.
- 41. AQD will support schools/departments in regard to the EQEC process and in understanding the quality aspect of the exercise. School/department EQEC leads should contact academic-quality@york.ac.uk if they have questions.
- 42. Strategic Insight and Analysis will support schools/departments in regard to the EQEC evidence provided via the Tableau workbook. School/department EQEC leads should contact business-intelligence@york.ac.uk.

EQEC Formal Reporting

- 43. Schools/departments will submit their Annual EQEC Submission by the specified annual deadline (section 47).
- 44. ADs ES will formally review school's/departments' Annual EQEC Submission template and their EQEC Action Plan template once per year and provide summary commentary and feedback within the designated section of the Annual EQEC Submission template. This will be returned to school/department EQEC leads by the specified deadline (section 47).
- 45. ADs ES will complete a *EQEC Faculty Report* template once per academic year which will be submitted to AQD by the specified deadline (section 47). The faculty report will summarise key themes of strength and areas requiring enhancement within the faculty, actions schools/departments are undertaking and any initiatives that are being coordinated at faculty level. The report will also provide feedback on the EQEC process, as well as specific issues that are likely to be most effectively tackled at an institutional level.
- 46. AQD will use the faculty reports to complete an Annual Institutional EQEC report template, which will include the faculty reports as appendices, and which will be submitted for consideration by UEC at its meeting in July. Where appropriate, feedback and other commentary will be forwarded to faculties for further dissemination to schools/departments.

EQEC Schedule

- 47. The following EQEC schedule applies to each academic year:

Semester 1 week 1	AQD duplicate school/department action plan for the forthcoming academic year.
Semester 1 week 1	Institutional EQEC Priorities disseminated.
Semester 1	ADs ES EQEC meetings with schools/departments.
Semester 1	FEC Semester 1 consideration of EQEC.
Semester 1 week 11	AQD review school/department EQEC evidence and circulate a summary of strengths and areas for enhancement.

Semester 1 week 11	AQD assign ratings to B Conditions on the basis of key quantitative evidence and circulate to schools/departments.
Semester 2	ADs ES EQEC meetings with schools/departments.
Semester 2 week	FEC Semester 2 consideration of EQEC.
Semester 2 week 6	Schools/departments submit Annual EQEC Review.
Semester 2 week 12	ADs ES review Annual EQEC submissions and provide feedback to schools/departments.
Summer Semester 2 week 1	ADs ES submit Faculty EQEC Report.
Summer Semester week 5	UEC receives Institutional EQEC Report.

48. Alongside this formal schedule, schools/departments will be expected to engage in a continuous process of reviewing new EQEC evidence as it becomes available, reviewing actions taken in relation to EQEC evidence, and amending and updating the *EQEC Action Plans* as appropriate.

Document control

Approval body:	University Education Committee
Procedure Owner:	
Responsible Service:	Academic Quality and Development
Procedure Manager:	Academic Quality Policy Manager
External regulatory and/or legal requirement addressed:	This procedure contributes to ensuring the University's compliance with the Office for Students Conditions of Registration B1 to B5.
Equality Impact Assessment:	N/A
Approval date:	09 July 2026
Effective from:	September 2026/27
Date of next review:	July 2027

Appendix 1: Common Aggregate Hierarchy Mapped to University of York schools/departments

CAH Level 1	CAH Level 2	CAH Level 3	York School/Department
CAH01 Medicine and dentistry	CAH01-01 Medicine and dentistry	CAH01-01-02 Medicine (non-specific)	Hull York Medical School
CAH02 Subjects allied to medicine	CAH02-04 Nursing and midwifery	- CAH02-04-01 Nursing (non-specific) - CAH02-04-02 Adult nursing - CAH02-04-04 Midwifery - CAH02-04-07 Mental health nursing	Health Sciences Health Sciences Health Sciences Health Sciences
CAH03 Biology and sport sciences	CAH03-01 Biosciences	- CAH03-01-01 Biosciences (non-specific) - CAH03-01-02 Biology (non-specific) - CAH03-01-4 Microbiology and cell science - CAH03-01-07 Genetics - CAH03-01-08 Molecular biology, biophysics and biochemistry	Biology Biology Biology Biology Biology Biology
CAH04 Psychology	CAH04-01 Psychology	CAH04-01-01 Psychology (non-specific)	Psychology
CAH07 Physical sciences	CAH07-01 Physics and astronomy	49. CAH07-01-01 Physics 50. CAH07-01-02 Astronomy	Physics and Engineering Technology Physics and Engineering Technology
	CAH07-02 Chemistry	CAH07-02-01 Chemistry	Chemistry
	CAH07-04 General, applied and forensic sciences	- CAH07-04-02 Forensic and archaeological sciences - CAH07-04-04 Natural sciences (non-specific)	Archaeology Natural Sciences
CAH09 Mathematical sciences	CAH09-01 Mathematical sciences	CAH09-01-01 Mathematics	Mathematics
CAH10 Engineering and Technology	CAH10-01 Engineering	- CAH10-01-01 Engineering (non-specific) - CAH10-01-08 Electrical and Electronic Engineering	Physics and Engineering Technology Physics and Engineering Technology
CAH11 Computing	CAH11-01 Computing	- CAH11-01-01 Computer Science - CAH11-01-05 Artificial Intelligence	Computer Science Computer Science

CAH13 Architecture, building and planning	CAH13-01 Architecture, building and planning	CAH13-01-01 Architecture	Architecture
CAH15 Social Sciences	CAH15-01 Sociology, social policy and anthropology	- CAH15-01-02 Sociology - CAH15-01-03 Social Policy	Sociology Business and Society
	CAH15-02 Economics	CAH15-02-01 Economics	Economics and Related Studies
	CAH15-03 politics	CAH15-03-01 Politics	Politics and International Relations
	CAH15-04 Health and social care	CAH15-04-01 Social work	Business and Society
CAH16 Law	CAH16-01 Law	CAH16-01-01 Law	Law
CAH17 Business and management	CAH17-01 Business and management	- CAH17-01-01 Business and management (non-specific) - CAH17-01-03 Marketing - CAH17-01-7 Finance	Business and Society Business and Society Economics
CAH19 Language and Area Studies	CAH19-01 English studies	- CAH19-01-01 English studies (non-specific) - CAH19-01-02 English language - CAH19-01-07 Linguistics	English and Related Literature Language and Linguistics Language and Linguistics
	CAH19-04 Languages and area studies	- CAH19-04-01 French studies - CAH19-04-04 Iberian studies	Language and Linguistics Language and Linguistics
CA20 Historical, philosophical and religious studies	CAH20-01 History and archaeology	- CAH20-01-01 History - CAH20-01-02 History of art, architecture and design - CAH20-01-03 Archaeology	History History of Art Archaeology
	CAH20-02 Philosophy and religious studies	CAH20-02-01 Philosophy	Philosophy
CAH22 Education and teaching	CAH22-01 Education and teaching	CAH22-01-01 Education	Education
CAH24 Media, journalism and communications	CAH24-01 Media, journalism and communications	CAH24-01-05 Media studies	Arts and Creative Technologies

CAH25 Design, and creative performing arts.	CAH25-01 Creative arts and design	• CAH25-01-04 Cinematics and photography	Arts and Creative Technologies
	CAH25-02 Performing arts	• CAH25-02-02 Music • CAH25-02-03 Drama	Arts and Creative Technologies
CAH26 Geography, earth and environmental sciences	CAH26-01 Geography, earth and environmental studies	• CAH26-01-02 Physical geographical sciences • CAH26-01-03 Human geography • CAH26-0104 Environmental sciences	Environment and Geography Environment and Geography Environment and Geography

Appendix 2: Office for Students baseline regulatory thresholds for B3 Student Outcomes data

	Continuation	Completion	Progression
Undergraduate (FT)	80%	75%	60%
Undergraduate (PT)	55%	40%	70%
Postgraduate Taught (FT)	80%	80%	70%
Postgraduate Taught (PT)	65%	65%	85%
PGCE	85%	85%	85%
Apprenticeship	70%	55%	75%