

Where do we go from here?

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Abstract

In June 2015, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) proposed a lighter touch quality assessment regime that would place greater reliance on institutions' own governance arrangements.

In July 2015 the Minister for Higher Education announced a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) parts of which appear inconsistent with HEFCE's proposals.

In August the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) responded to HEFCE's proposals envisaging some developments to its present quality assessment arrangements.

This article analyses the key issues and principles that will supposedly govern the design of a new quality assessment regime from 2017.

It proposes points of reference against which to evaluate the proposals for that new regime; these are whether the approach to review that is adopted:

- a) differentiates between institutions on the basis of their capacities to manage their responsibilities;
- b) shows the regulator's willingness to trust institutions to discharge their responsibilities (with verification) and willingness by institutions to accept their responsibilities;
- c) adopts an approach to risk and its management that is forward-looking and enables pre-emptive actions to forestall negative outcomes; and
- d) makes greater use of metrics that are interpreted by experts qualified to make judgements on academic matters.