



The Quality Assurance Agency and Access to HE

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What do we do?

QAA mission:

- ‘to safeguard **standards** and improve the **quality** of UK higher education’



How do we do it?

1. publish expectations about standards and quality that apply to **all UK HE provision** – wherever it is delivered



2. review **all UK HE providers** and publish reports on our findings

3. work with universities and colleges to encourage continual improvements in quality

QAA – what kind of organisation?

- **independent** company and charity governed by our Board
 - (not a government body)
- **funded** through contracts (eg with UK HE funding councils and Home Office) and by subscriptions from all HE providers
- **work with others** across the HE sector as part of a regulatory framework



What do we do for Access to HE?

QAA's role in Access to HE

- 'identify Access to HE courses of an approved **quality** which maintain appropriate **standards** and are recognised as a national qualification'



Access to HE – how do we do it?

1. *The QAA Recognition Scheme for Access to HE*
 - set of expectations (including the Diploma specification) that apply to all Access to HE Diplomas – wherever they are delivered
2. Review all Access Validating Agencies and publish reports on findings
3. Work with AVAs and others to encourage continual improvements in quality



What do we mean?

Definitions for an educational context:

- **standards**: the level of achievement and student performance that is required for the award of a particular qualification or grade
- **quality**: everything that's done (eg teaching, assessment, provision of resources) to
 - a) maintain the standards of qualifications
 - b) support students' learning and enhance the learning experience - including the achievement of the purpose of the learning or the qualification (ie 'fitness for purpose')

Where does responsibility for quality lie?

1. QAA – as regulator
 2. the Access Validating Agency as awarding body
 3. the provider
 4. the course team
 5. the course delivery
 6. the assessment strategy and plan
 7. The unit assessment plan
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Access to HE Diploma specification: clarity of purpose

- to ensure **equity** for students
- to improve **consistency, clarity** and transparency
- to underpin the assurance of **standards**
- to maintain some degree of **local determination** of details of content, delivery and assessment

The 2013 Diploma specification: key changes

