

Are you interested in working with QAA to regulate and develop Access to HE provision?

Members of the Access Recognition and Licensing Committee

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) safeguards standards and improves the quality of UK higher education. QAA also has a remit for regulating and developing Access to HE courses and providing advice to government in this area. QAA's work in Access to HE is overseen by the Access Recognition and Licensing Committee (ARLC), which reports to the QAA Board of Directors.

We are inviting applications for new members of the ARLC in the following categories:

- **FE sector** - head of institution
- **FE sector** - other
- **others with appropriate experience** (2) - who may come from higher or further education or who may have other relevant experience.

We are looking, in particular, for individuals with senior experience in organisations that deliver Access to HE courses (predominantly FE colleges in England and Wales) or in organisations that receive Access to HE students (predominantly HE institutions), and/or those with other experience that has given them a good understanding of the context for, and operation of, recognised Access to HE courses.

QAA has adopted a Single Equality Scheme and is committed to diversity. Applications are particularly welcome from members of communities that are under-represented in public life.

Further details about the ARLC and its work are attached.

How to apply

Applications should be submitted by email attachment to Kath Dentith, Head of Access (k.dentith@qaa.ac.uk). Potential applicants who wish to have an informal discussion about the Committee's work may contact Kath Dentith by email or telephone (01452 557109).

Applicants should provide:

- a statement about the nature of their interest in the work of the ARLC; their previous involvement in Access to HE; and relevant areas of expertise that they would bring to the Committee (see further details)
- a curriculum vitae which highlights experience which is relevant to the Committee's work.

Applications must be received by **1 February 2012**.

The Access Recognition and Licensing Committee members: further details

QAA's role in relation to Access to HE

1 QAA is responsible for the recognition and regulation of Access to HE courses. There are currently about 1,500 separate Access to HE courses, delivered by some 350 providers in England and Wales, most of which are FE colleges. Access to HE courses:

- are designed to provide a preparation for progression to HE
- are targeted at adults from disadvantaged backgrounds with few prior qualifications
- lead to the award of the Access to HE Diploma for about 20,000 students each year (with a similar number progressing to HE)
- are recognised within a framework established by the HE sector in 1989, which is currently managed by QAA.

2 QAA's framework for course recognition includes regulations that apply to the qualification (the Access to HE Diploma), which is delivered on all Access to HE courses; and regulations that apply to the awarding bodies (Access Validating Agencies – AVAs), which are directly responsible for the validation and quality assurance of courses. There are currently 14 AVAs (13 in England and one in Wales). AVAs are legally and financially independent organisations, although all are required by QAA to have structures and approaches to course development and monitoring for Access to HE that depend on partnership arrangements between FE and HE, so that courses can be designed and developed to respond to local and regional needs and to changing opportunities in HE.

3 QAA sets overarching criteria and requirements for AVAs and ensures that they are met through processes of annual monitoring and periodic review. On the basis of this review and monitoring activity, QAA advises the Skills Funding Agency about which courses have met the regulations, and this leads to eligibility for public funding for those courses.

4 In the last five years, QAA has undertaken a major programme of development, introducing a common credit framework and standard qualification specification and grading system for the Access to HE Diploma. QAA also gathers and publishes national statistics about Access to HE courses and students' achievements and progression and maintains a publicly searchable database of all recognised courses which, together with other information about QAA's work in this area, is available from Access to HE website (www.accesstohe.ac.uk).

The ARLC's responsibilities

5 The ARLC reports and makes recommendations to the QAA Board of Directors. The Committee receives reports on AVA reviews and monitoring activity and makes recommendations about the award and renewal of AVA licences, and it is involved in decisions relating to all major developments in other areas of QAA's Access to HE activities. The main areas of responsibility covered by the ARLC's formal remit are:

- a the framework of arrangements that provides for the recognition and regulation of Access to HE courses (the QAA Recognition Scheme for Access to Higher Education)
- b the licensing, monitoring and review of Access Validating Agencies (the awarding bodies for Access to HE)
- c the development of the Access to HE qualification, with reference to the qualification's principal purpose of providing a preparation for study in higher education for adults from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The nature of the commitment for ARLC members

6 The Committee normally meets four times a year, with two meetings being held in London and two meetings at QAA's offices in Gloucester. One of these meetings usually involves a full day and an overnight stay; the other three are usually half-day commitments.

7 Members are expected to acquaint themselves with the Recognition Scheme documentation and read committee papers carefully, and contribute fully to the Committee's discussions. Members may occasionally be asked to provide expert advice between meetings. Members may also be invited to serve on development groups that are established by the ARLC.

8 Membership of the Committee is unpaid. Travel and other expenses are reimbursed.

Relevant knowledge and experience for ARLC members

9 ARLC members jointly hold the knowledge and expertise needed for the Committee to be able to carry out its remit effectively. Knowledge and/or experience and active interest in the following areas is particularly valued:

- decision-making and policy engagement at senior level
- regulation and quality assurance in FE and/or HE
- the operation of Access Validating Agencies
- the Access to HE Diploma and other credit-based qualifications
- the policy and funding context for the delivery of Access to HE courses in FE
- the HE policy context relating to widening participation, social mobility and fair access
- common practices and current issues affecting HE admissions
- HE and FE cross-sector collaborative arrangements
- commitment to the wider purposes of Access to HE provision.

10 ARLC members also need to bring independence of mind and a wider perspective to the Committee's deliberations, bringing the range of their experience to bear in making impartial judgements. Members are not expected to act as advocates or representatives of particular AVAs or types of AVA; of individual institutions or institutional types; or of narrowly defined sectoral interests. The regulatory nature of the ARLC's business requires members to be able to maintain strict standards of confidentiality.

Please note: current AVA officers and permanent employees of AVAs are not eligible to serve as members of the ARLC.

Appointment

11 All appointments are made by recommendation of the ARLC to the QAA Board.

Membership

12 The Committee has 11 members (with a possible further two by co-option), including two Board members (one of whom is the Committee's Chair); three members from the HE sector; three members from the FE sector; two other members with appropriate experience (who may come from FE or HE or who may have other relevant experience); and the Chief Executive of QAA.

13 Members are invited to serve on the Committee for three years in the first instance and may be reappointed for a maximum further period of three years.

14 Current members of the ARLC are:

- **Professor Nick Foskett (Chair)**
Vice Chancellor, University of Keele
- **Dr Phil Bentley**
Head of Quality and Curriculum, Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology
- **Dr Phillip Cardew**
Pro Vice Chancellor, London Southbank University
- **Mr Mike Farmer**
Independent educational consultant
- **Mr Anthony McClaran**
Chief Executive, QAA
- **Professor Margaret Noble**
Principal, University College Plymouth St Mark and St John
- **Mr Paul Phillips**
Head of Admissions and UK Recruitment, Royal Holloway, University of London
- **Professor Muriel Robinson**
Vice Chancellor, Bishop Grosseteste University College Lincoln
- **Dr Marie Stowell**
Director of Quality and Educational Development, University of Worcester

