

Approach to external quality assurance, engagement and enhancement by HM Inspectors AY 2022-23

Please share this information with staff

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Arrangements for external quality assurance, engagement and enhancement for AY 2022-23

During AY 2022-23, HM Inspectors will undertake the following activities in colleges:

1. On-going engagement with a link HM Inspector

Link HM Inspectors will continue to engage with all colleges to provide tailored support and challenge in the coming year. This may be undertaken either virtually or through in-person visits as required.

2. Annual engagement Visits

HM Inspectors will undertake an annual engagement visit (AEV) in colleges where, based on the outcomes of previous engagement, satisfactory progress is being made against improvement priorities, or where SFC and/or HM Inspectors have not identified any aspects of performance requiring further exploration.

2.1 Approach to AEVs

AEVs will be short, light touch visits lasting typically one day. AEVs will be undertaken by the college link HM Inspector, supported by HM Inspectors colleagues, Associate Assessors (AAs), and Student Team Members (STMs) as appropriate.

2.2 What do HM Inspectors focus on during an AEV?

AEVs will explore the following themes;

- Learner progress and outcomes,
- Curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment,
- Evaluation to facilitate improvement, and
- Learner engagement.

2.3 Notification of the AEV

AEV dates will be planned collaboratively between the college and the link HM Inspector.

2.4 How do we share our findings?

On conclusion of the AEV, the team will provide a verbal report of their findings to the college. It will provide assurance of the quality of the learning experience, and may identify aspects requiring further improvement. For multi-college regions, a representative of the RSB will be invited to attend.

2.5 What happens after the AEV?

Following our internal quality assurance processes, a written report will be produced and shared with the college and SFC. The college will have the opportunity to check the report for factual accuracy within five working days. Three weeks after the AEV is

completed, a final written report will be provided to the college and the college link Inspector will make arrangements to share the report with the college Board. For multi-college regions the report will also be shared with the RSB. At this point, a short statement confirming the outcome of the AEV and any next steps will be published on Education Scotland's website. AEV outcomes will inform future engagement approaches with individual colleges.

3. Progress visits

HM Inspectors will undertake progress visits (PVs) in colleges where areas for improvement requiring further progress were identified during previous engagement, or where both SFC and HM Inspectors identify aspects of performance requiring further exploration. Each visit will evaluate the effectiveness of college approaches to self-evaluation and planning for improvement, and consider progress made against identified targets. HM Inspectors will identify what is working well and where further improvement may still be required. Visits will also consider key indicators of performance, and their impact on the learning experience. PVs will commence in autumn 2022.

3.1 Approach to PVs

PVs will be managed by a Lead HM Inspector (LI) who will be accompanied by HM Inspectors colleagues, one of whom will be the college link Inspector. AAs and STMs will be deployed to support PVs.

PV planning will be intelligence-led. Pre-visit planning discussions will be held with SFC and sparqs to establish aspects for exploration in particular colleges. A range of evidence sources will be considered including:

- Previous PV outcomes
- Performance Indicators (PIs)
- College self-evaluation and improvement plans
- SFC intelligence regarding performance
- Learner feedback/sparqs engagement
- Stakeholder feedback re: performance

This will inform the scale and scope for each visit, tailored to the specific circumstances of individual colleges.

Colleges will identify a senior manager to act as college nominee and liaise with HM Inspectors. A visit schedule will be agreed in advance, and will include meetings held with college senior leaders, managers, staff, learners and stakeholders. It is expected that colleges will evidence how stakeholders have been engaged in college arrangements for evaluation and improvement planning. PV teams will be on site to undertake meetings with staff and learners. Colleges will be required to provide a short written context statement in advance of their PV outlining their approach to quality improvement and evaluation along with copies of any relevant documentation, for example, self-evaluation reports and improvement plans. The PV team will meet at the end of each day to discuss their findings and these meetings will be attended by the college nominee.

3.2 What do HM Inspectors focus on during a PV?

PVs will focus on providing assurance of the quality of provision being delivered and of the learner experience. Other than a short context statement, there will be **no requirement** to complete and submit any new documentation in advance of a PV. However, the lead HM Inspector may find it helpful receive copies of existing documentation to help prepare for the visit. PVs will not routinely involve observation of learning and teaching approaches. However, colleges will be required to demonstrate the effectiveness of their arrangements to evaluate the quality of the learning experience including learning and teaching practice. To support this, HM Inspectors may include lesson observations if deemed appropriate. The approaches to improving outcomes for learners and the quality of the learning experience will be a core part of the PVs. The team will engage in professional dialogue and review relevant documentation.

Learner engagement is fundamental to the college's ability to identify areas for development. Colleges should view students as partners in supporting improvement and should have effective processes for engaging students in contributing to enhancement activities. During PVs, HM Inspectors and AAs and STMs will engage in conversations with groups of learners to identify the progress they are making and how effectively they engage in and influence their individual learning experiences. By focusing on outcomes and impact and observing practice and experiences directly, HM Inspectors support college staff to reflect on what is working well and what needs to improve.

HM Inspectors will encourage colleges to share examples of highly effective practice and, where identified, will disseminate these more widely to support improvement.

3.3 Who carries out PVs?

PVs will be led by HM Inspectors, AAs and an STM.

PVs will usually be carried out across two to three days. The size of team and duration of the visit will be adjusted to recognise the context of the college.

3.4 How will we carry out the PV?

PVs are planned collaboratively between the college, HM Inspectors and SFC. Prior to the visit, colleges will have the opportunity to provide relevant PV updates, identified through self-evaluation, to reflect the progress made and highlight any changes in circumstances. PVs are informed by the [PRAISE framework](#) which is used to help establish and maintain positive relationships with all involved. HM Inspectors recognise that all discussions and engagements are opportunities to share and develop thinking, and to learn from each other.

Throughout the visit, team members will involve managers and staff in professional dialogue, with the aim of supporting improvement. Through this approach, HM Inspectors will work with college staff and should ensure that the visit experience is a collaborative process.

3.5 Notification of the PV

Colleges will be informed in writing of the planned date for their PV six weeks in advance of commencement of the visit.

3.6 How do we share our findings?

On conclusion of the PV, the team will provide a verbal report of their findings to the college. This will include commentary on the accuracy and effectiveness of a college's self-evaluation approaches, progress made against improvement targets, and the experiences and outcomes of learners. It will provide assurance of the quality of the learning experience, and may identify aspects requiring further improvement. For multi-college regions, a representative of the RSB will be invited to attend.

3.7 What happens after the PV?

Following our internal quality assurance processes, a written report will be produced and shared with the college and SFC. The college will have the opportunity to comment if they wish within five working days. Three weeks after the PV is completed, a final written report will be provided to the college and the LI will make arrangements to share the report with the college Board. For multi-college regions, the report will also be shared with the RSB. At this point, a short statement confirming the outcomes of the PV and any next steps will be published on Education Scotland's website. PV outcomes will inform future engagement approaches with individual colleges.

4. Thematic reviews

In order to support improvement in aspects of college sector performance, HM Inspectors will undertake a programme of thematic reviews. These will evaluate the following;

- Education and training pathways;
- Curriculum planning, support and delivery, and
- The impact of evaluation on improving outcomes for learners.

Thematic reviews may be carried out at college, regional or national level. The footprint of each thematic review will be adjusted to take account of scale and reach of institutions. This will support the evaluation of approaches and impact, providing depth of intelligence about the individual organisations involved, along with providing information to inform capacity building and future approaches to improvement and enhancement. The thematic reviews will provide opportunities for collaborative working with partner quality bodies, for example QAA Scotland, in evaluating the quality of provision and capacity for improvement.

The symbiotic relationship between tertiary education providers in contributing to the education and skills pipeline is a key component of the proposed arrangements. Early implementation of the thematic assignments will support an incremental approach to strengthening arrangements between providers to avoid unnecessary duplication whilst building on existing strengths.

The proposed arrangements are designed to enable Post-16 providers and national bodies that have a focus in assuring and improving the quality of provision, to adjust and adapt to future arrangements.

The approach seeks to strengthen the collective knowledge of providers to meet current and projected economic priorities at local, regional and national levels. The findings of HM Inspectors and other bodies will be instrumental in developing the focus and scope of reviews. The approach also seeks to build, incrementally, the capacity of practitioners across tertiary organisations to engage collaboratively in implementing future arrangements to improve outcomes for learners. In the longer term, the approach will ensure a coherent and sustainable national approach that is founded on continuous improvement and avoidance of unnecessary duplication.

HM Inspectors will also seek to identify and share examples of highly effective practice, highlight what is working well and make recommendations about what needs to improve.

Aspects for exploration, timing and participation in thematic reviews will be agreed with SFC and colleges in advance.

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