

# Quality Improvement Strategy 2022–2023



**UK GRADUATE**  
power through education

[www.ukgraduate.org.uk](http://www.ukgraduate.org.uk)



|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>TITLE:</b>                             | Quality Improvement Strategy   |
| <b>AIM:</b>                               | The Quality Improvement Strategy aims to bring together, within a single concise statement, the wide ranging initiatives, procedures and arrangements which are in place and being developed continuously to improve learners' chances of success. |
| <b>RELATED POLICIES &amp; PROCEDURES:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality Assurance Strategy</li> <li>• Learning and Teaching Strategy</li> <li>• Self-Assessment Report</li> <li>• Professional Development Policy</li> </ul>  |
| <b>DATE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:</b>           | June 2022  |
| <b>APPROVED BY:</b>                       | Executive Team   |
| <b>DATE OF APPROVAL:</b>                  | June 2022  |
| <b>DATE OF NEXT REVIEW:</b>               | June 2023  |
| <b>DISTRIBUTION:</b>                      | All staff via email and College Onedrive   |
| <b>VERSION CONTROL:</b>                   | Version 1.0  |
| <b>PERSON RESPONSIBLE:</b>                | Director   |

| EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT   |  |                              |
|--|--|------------------------------|
| Phase 1<br>Initial Screening completed   | Date:  |                              |
| Phase 2  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not required | (please tick if appropriate) |
| Full impact assessment completed/ not required   | Completed on (if applicable):                    |                              |
| This document is available in alternative formats, please contact reception or, alternatively, e-mail <a href="mailto:info@ukgraduate.org.uk">info@ukgraduate.org.uk</a> to discuss how we can help you. |  |                              |



## **1. Introduction**

The 2022-2023 Quality Improvement Strategy aims to bring together, within a single concise statement, the wide ranging initiatives, procedures and arrangements which are currently in place, and those being developed, to improve learners' chances of success. This strategy is applicable to both Further Education and Higher Education programmes at UK Graduate. It underpins UK Graduate's Quality Assurance Policy and seeks to meet the requirements of the new Education Inspection Framework (EIF) and the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education. The focus of the strategy is to bring about year-on-year measurable improvements to learners' achievement on all learning programmes and underlines UK Graduate's commitment to raising standards. UK Graduate intends to ensure learners choose the right course, are inducted and supported effectively, experience high quality teaching, learning and assessment and their performance is assessed accurately and constructively. Learners are supported to progress to a positive destination, which may be employment, apprenticeships, further education or higher education.

## **2. Focus of Quality Improvement Strategy in 2022-2023**

The focus of interventions will be to address areas identified through the self-assessment processes for further education, annual quality review processes for higher education, and reports from external bodies. The Strategy acknowledges the key elements of securing outstanding outcomes for all its learners, namely a relentless drive to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and providing a rich learning environment across all sites and across all College activity. The key areas for improvement are:

- Ensuring that teaching, learning and assessment meets the needs of all learners and that the most-able are challenged to achieve their best.
- Making sure that all formats of feedback helps learners to make progress
- Bringing about greater consistency in the way that Equality and Diversity is promoted in lessons
- Improving attendance and punctuality
- Continue to develop approaches to the use of Information and Learning Technology (ILT) and digital literacy skills so that all learners benefit from a high quality e-learning experience and to ensure efficiency in the delivery of the curriculum
- Promoting British Values to all learners, including apprentices
- Improving achievement rates on the small number of programmes that are below the national average
- Further enhancement to the HE student experience to support wider participation in the local area
- Further quality activities to ensure the accuracy of information provided to students and their acknowledgement of appeals and complaints procedures as per the guidance and criterion set by the Office for Students (OfS), Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) and Office of Independent Adjudication (OIA).



### 3. Quality Assurance Procedures and Self-Assessment

UK Graduate's quality assurance procedures are designed to examine areas for improvement within UK Graduate's provision and enhance strengths. UK Graduate's procedures are designed to meet the requirements of the Education Inspection Framework (EIF), and the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. UK Graduate provides a clear focus on the EIF throughout the annual review of the self-assessment procedures for all curriculum and service areas. UK Graduate's Self-Assessment Report is internally and externally validated through the peer review and development process with other colleges. This ensures that judgments and grading are accurate. The 4 Key Judgements which underpin UK Graduate's SAR are:

- Quality of Education
- Behaviour and Attitudes
- Personal Development
- Leadership and Management

The management team focuses on the quality enhancement of UK Graduate's FE/HE provision and ensures that awarding body requirements are met as well as meeting the requirements of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

Particular attention is paid to the setting of realistic, but stretching, targets for learner pass rates, retention and achievement rates. As part of UK Graduate's quality assurance procedures, performance against targets will be examined regularly and individually by the Heads of Curriculums. Heads of curriculums will be responsible in forecasting achievement rates and value added outcomes at course level and highlight 'at risk' programmes for early intervention. The outcomes from these reviews will be presented at College Executive Team (CET) meetings.

Internal Inspection of cross-College themes is an integral part of UK Graduate's quality assurance process and will serve to verify the accuracy of the curriculum areas' self-assessment reports. Curriculum areas to be inspected and topics of focus are determined by assessment of the current risks, identified areas in the SAR and duration since last inspection. The inspections involve scrutiny of those issues identified for closer monitoring and improvement from internal and external quality assurance systems. From these internal inspections, graded inspection reports are published with explicit analysis of strengths and areas for improvement.

The Head of Quality (HOQ) considers reports on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and the standards of provision. Learner pass rates, retention and value added are analysed by age, level and type of qualification and the recommendations for action are discussed. The Head of Quality will also consider the progression of learners following the completion of learning programmes. The Head of Quality will set and approve targets for pass rates and retention, and consider and approve the Self-Assessment Report, updates, and the processes leading to the publication of these documents.



#### **4. Value Added and Target Setting**

UK Graduate's Value Added (VA) arrangements ensure targets are set for all full time learners. VA is used for formative assessment purposes as well as for summative reporting. Tutors use the "Minimum Expected Grade" to inform discussion and agreement of the learner's "Target Grade" which is then recorded by the learner in their ILP. UK Graduate uses awarding body recommendations to set aspiration targets for all level 3 learners. UK Graduate aspires to be in the upper quartile nationally over the next three years for Value Added outcomes for learners on graded Level 3 courses. Ungraded qualifications at level 1 and 2 will have individualised targets set that are subject-specific and relate to the learners' progression and career aspirations such as employability skills and specific English and mathematics targets.

#### **5. Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

UK Graduate has detailed procedures for the observation of teaching and learning, which reflect the requirements of the EIF. The observation of HE provision takes into account the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) and includes a greater emphasis on peer-review using a model of good practice from the AoC Scholarship Framework. The monitoring and improvement of teaching, learning and assessment is completed via both graded and ungraded observations, both of which result in varying formats of feedback and actions for future improvements. With regard to formal graded observations, these are carried out by a trained team of observers which includes Heads of Curriculum and Senior Managers. UK Graduate will provide annual refresher training to this team, part of which involves joint observations for the purpose of ensuring consistency in grading and feedback to teachers. In addition, UK Graduate will engage external consultants, to validate the accuracy of lesson observation judgements and overall grades.

UK Graduate maintains strong links between the grading of teaching and the management of performance. This is facilitated through UK Graduate's Performance Management Framework to demonstrate Professional Effectiveness. The appraisal and performance management record for each member of teaching, assessing, and learning support staff places a strong emphasis on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and includes outstanding performance payments. Outstanding practitioners play a key role in sharing outstanding practice and developing other staff. As part of the professional effectiveness criteria, staff are required to achieve a 'good' or 'outstanding' grade from their annual graded observation. Teachers who achieve a 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate' grade from graded observations will be supported through rigorous action planning, then re-observed within a 12 week developmental period. The 12 week development plan consists of a range of supportive activities to monitor improvements including two ungraded focused observations where additional feedback is provided, peer observations of good and / or outstanding practitioners, working with one of UK Graduate's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Coaches and engagement with on-line training materials.

UK Graduate sets targets at all levels to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment from graded, formal observations. Targets for 2022-2023 are that a minimum of 95% of graded lesson observations will be outstanding or good with no inadequate teaching.

UK Graduate has made a strategic decision to significantly increase the number of walk-through observations, with a target of around 100 across UK Graduate each year. Given that these shorter observations will be undertaken without notice, they can prove to be a highly effective way of identifying day-to-day teaching, learning and assessment characteristics. Walk-throughs are undertaken by curriculum and senior managers and targets for improvement are set and recorded which are followed up promptly. The quantity of walk-throughs, along with the targets set and proportion completed, are monitored by UK Graduate's Head of Quality and reported in Curriculum and Quality Meetings.



Reflecting UK Graduate's value of openness, regular peer observations will continue to feature in all curriculum areas in which staff are encouraged to explore new and innovative teaching and learning strategies. These peer observations are valued by staff and include peer observations with colleagues from other curriculum areas.

Teaching, learning and assessment is the core business of UK Graduate and provides the key focus of UK Graduate's staff training and development programme. UK Graduate will develop a comprehensive staff development handbook with an emphasis on using the findings from lesson observations to inform college-wide staff development activities. Staff development is also targeted to ensure that individual training and development needs are met. Good practice from outside UK Graduate is identified through reports by external organisations and awarding bodies, and from good practice and future inspection reports from Ofsted and the QAA. A key area of continued development is the use of e-learning in teaching, learning and assessment. UK Graduate's management team coordinates staff training to support all teachers to improve their e- learning competency.

## **6. Leadership and Management**

UK Graduate's procedures for assuring the quality of leadership and management are centred on the effectiveness of 'Leadership and Management'. Emphasis is placed on how well managers set a clear direction leading to high quality education and learning, and the effectiveness of steps taken to secure improvements. Within the context of improving quality and standards, the management team assess how well resources are deployed to achieve value for money.

Through their own quality assurance procedures, outlined in the Quality Assurance Strategy, the Head of Quality will assess how well they set the strategic direction of UK Graduate, determine its educational character and monitor performance to bring about improvements.

## **7. Promoting Equality and Diversity**

UK Graduate's commitment to improve quality and standards is underpinned by its Diversity & Equality Policy, Equality Objectives and the Equality Objective Implementation Plan which incorporate UK Graduate priorities relating to the elimination of discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advancing equality of opportunity and the fostering of good relations. The management team, together with support of staff members and learner representatives, are responsible for supporting the implementation of the Diversity & Equality Policy and monitoring progress towards each of the agreed Equality Objectives.

Learner attainment is interrogated at course, curriculum area and college level to identify gaps in performance between different groups including 16-18 and 19+ learners, those with and without a disability/learning difficulty, male and female learners and those from different ethnic groups. Actions, at the appropriate level, are taken to close identified gaps and include staff and curriculum development projects where appropriate.

In accordance with its statutory duty, UK Graduate publishes information annually on its website detailing its work relating to equality and diversity and the progress made towards the achievement of its agreed Equality Objectives.

Whilst comprehensive arrangements are in place to promote equality and diversity within the classroom, UK Graduate continues to prioritise the embedding of equality and diversity within teaching and learning, the effectiveness of which is subject to monitoring during internal inspection.



## **8. Entry Requirements**

While UK Graduate has an extensive curriculum portfolio, it is essential that learners are recruited to the right course at the appropriate level of programme if they are to successfully complete their studies. While all learners are challenged to exceed their potential, they must be enrolled on programmes where they are expected to complete and achieve. In addition to carrying out diagnostic testing to assess learners' ability in English and mathematics, many curriculum areas have introduced vocational screening tests to assist in the analysis of learner need. It is the responsibility of staff enrolling learners to ensure entry requirements are met. If there is any uncertainty, the Head of Curriculum is consulted.

## **9. Learner Induction**

It is important that all learners are welcomed to UK Graduate and become quickly aware of UK Graduate's facilities, services and requirements of their learning programmes. All learners, both full time and part time, including learners commencing their programme in-year, will be inducted to UK Graduate. Learners starting in September will participate in a comprehensive induction programme including an extensive Freshers' Fair, curriculum induction, Principal's welcome, Health and Safety speaker, guidance meetings and an introduction to the learning resource centre. Learners starting later in the year can access the same introduction via the online induction service offering the same comprehensive overview of UK Graduate and its services. Teaching and learning observations of induction take place in each curriculum area and feed into UK Graduate's quality assurance processes. There is a particular emphasis in the induction process to ensure that safeguarding issues are addressed and learners are aware of what to do if they ever feel unsafe whilst at college. British Values and elements of the Prevent Agenda are also shared with learners during the induction period.

## **10. English and mathematics**

UK Graduate recognises that English and mathematics are paramount to the success of individuals in their training, employment and personal life. English and mathematics remain a pre-requisite, with priority given to the achievement of GCSE qualifications 4-9. In addition to committing to the requirement that all 16-19 year old learners achieve a GCSE 4 grade or above, UK Graduate will continue to ensure that the literacy and numeracy skills of its adult learners are improved also, so that they too are able to meet their full potential. Learners who have achieved a grade 3 (previously D GCSE grade) will re-sit the GCSE qualification in the respective subject. Learners without a grade 3 will be enrolled onto the most appropriate qualification given their skills profile and level of ability as identified through initial assessment. For learners, including those at Level 3, who already have a 4-9 grade in English and/or mathematics, there is the opportunity to access skills improvement classes in order to gain additional, higher level qualifications or to improve their current grade at GCSE. These learners will continue to be stretched and set challenging targets for the improvement of their English and mathematics skills, support for which will be embedded into their study programme. Individual learners may also be enrolled on a 'fast-track' programme creating an opportunity for early resits.

UK Graduate will also offer City & Guilds Functional Skills courses to students who require a certain level of Maths or English to proceed on to a FE or HE course.





## **11. Apprenticeships**

Quality assurance for apprenticeship activity is embedded within UK Graduate's overall quality assurance processes and in-year performance is monitored through UK Graduate's Quality and Teaching Standards meetings. All apprentices receive specific information, advice and guidance to provide effective enrolment and progression opportunities on their chosen programme. A rigorous initial assessment process is in place to ensure new learners embark on the correct programmes to meet individual career aspirations and which provide targeted support needs. This process is then followed up throughout the duration of the apprenticeship with learner and employer reviews, which set clear targets for learners to ensure that they are progressing and achieving the expectations of the framework. To maximise the learners' experience and opportunities to succeed, UK Graduate maintains an excellent relationship with employers through the work of the Businesses Development Unit, curriculum areas and individual assessors.

## **12. Tutorial Support**

Effective group and individual tutorial support, including the review of Individual Learning Plans, is seen as an essential element in supporting learners to complete and achieve on their programmes. The Individual Learning Plan (ILP) is key to setting individual SMART targets with learners. All learners on full-time FE courses and substantial part-time courses have an ILP. UK Graduate tutorial entitlement ensures that learners receive a comprehensive programme of individual and group tutorials, including a range of mandatory topics. The effectiveness of the tutorial programme is monitored by Learner Services. Teaching and learning observations of tutorial delivery take place in each curriculum area and feed into UK Graduate's quality assurance processes. Tutorial Briefs ensure that direct communication with learners on key themes such as the governments Prevent strategy, Equality & Diversity and Safeguarding can be further enhanced. All students have the opportunity to achieve the Enterprise and Employability Passport emphasising the development of job-ready and social skills.

## **13. Retention Strategy**

UK Graduate Retention Policy ensures that learners at risk of failing to complete their course are identified in a systematic and timely manner, with appropriate strategies agreed, implemented and monitored. Retention statistics are monitored closely in-year as a key performance indicator for quality improvement. In-year retention is monitored closely at learner level and discussed at Curriculum Quality Reviews half termly, or more frequent if required, to ensure prompt interventions are in place to support at-risk individuals and groups. This is coupled with a strengthening of initial advice and guidance aimed at ensuring that learners embark on the course most appropriate to their aspirations, interests and abilities.

The 'Personal Success Programme' (PSP) based within the Foundation and Learning Support area creates an enjoyable individualised programme of successful learning for identified students between levels Entry 1, 2 and Level 1, 2, maintaining all elements of the Study Programme. The programme enables curriculum interests and motivations to be retained, assisting positive progression opportunities, whilst providing effective guidance to maximise academic achievements for vulnerable 'at risk' learners. The identification of learners who are suitable for the PSP progresses chronologically throughout the academic year, monitoring individual needs. Learners on the programme are provided with the support and attention to maximise the opportunities to achieve academically and socially whilst progressing to a positive destination.





## **14. Attendance Strategy**

UK Graduate Attendance Policy regards good attendance as a key factor in the successful achievement of a learner's targets. The policy is designed to ensure that learners who are absent without prior authorisation are swiftly identified, contacted promptly and supported to return. The primary responsibility for contacting and supporting absent learners resides with the relevant course tutor supported by Learner Services. Individual learner notes and actions are monitored in the ILP. Weekly attendance reports provide a comprehensive identification of learners currently under UK Graduate target of 90%. Separate attendance reports by curriculum area for Maths and English and Directed Private Learning (DPL) are also produced. Automated text messages and phone calls are used to create an instant communication method notifying students, parents and guardians of non-attendance. Regular one-to-one progress reviews between course tutors and learners remain fundamental to improving punctuality, attendance, retention and achievement. The focus will continue to be on supporting all learners to achieve at least 90% attendance, and ensure that learners understand the impact that poor attendance can have on their progress and eventual achievement.

## **15. Learner Support**

All existing and potential learners have access to initial advice and guidance and to a strong pastoral and welfare support system. Each full-time learner has a personal tutor. Guidance Officers are available at all sites and have a regular presence in the local Job Centres.

Additional learning support needs are identified through comprehensive initial assessment arrangements. In-class support is provided by Learning Support Advisors to address identified need. SEND learners are identified upon application and support provided in accordance with assessments provided by the applicant's school. UK Graduate collaborates with external agencies including local authorities, special schools, social services and health services to ensure the effective implementation of the Children and Families Act, in particular the management of the Education, Health and Care Plans.

## **16. College Timetable**

UK Graduate timetable for full-time learners is reviewed annually and short courses are reviewed quarterly. This serves the objectives of maximising learner choice and optimising class size while securing the effective use of UK Graduate's accommodation and learning facilities.

## **17. Course Management**

The course management files in place at UK Graduate are a set of live documents, which contributes to improved course administration and management. These files (physical or electronic) are maintained by course leaders and will now be monitored by their respective Head of Curriculum Area to form a key focus for internal audit.



## **18. Professional Development of Staff**

Underpinning all aspects of UK Graduate's improvement strategy is the Staff Training and Professional Development Policy and programme. Staff development associated with aspects of the improvement strategy will be given priority in the allocation of UK Graduate's staff training and development budget. The staff development programme seeks to ensure that teaching staff have the necessary skills and up-to-date knowledge to deliver high quality teaching, learning and assessment.

An annual staff training and performance evaluation report will consider how the training and development, undertaken by teaching and support staff, have contributed to UK Graduate raising standards and achieving its corporate priorities. The priority for appraisal of staff is to plan for improvements in teaching and learning and College services, and the staff development required to support this. The professional effectiveness criteria support and enhance the appraisal process. Outstanding practitioners play a key role in the planning and delivery of the Learning Enhancement and Advancing Practices Programme (LEAPP) which utilises the skills of teachers and assessors to share outstanding practice and develop staff.

## **19. Peer Review and Development**

UK Graduate will now participate in peer review and development activities with several general and specialist FE colleges. This provides the opportunity to share good practice across colleges and curriculum areas through observations and peer reviews, and also to validate self-assessment judgements. In addition, UK Graduate has links with a large number of colleges and providers with which it carries out good practice sharing activities. UK Graduate additionally reviews external consultation opportunities to provide additional support in areas for improvement or new developments.

## **20. E-Learning**

UK Graduate places a high priority on the development of Information and Learning Technology (ILT) as a means of developing learners' digital literacy skills, enhancing the learner experience and bringing about further efficiencies in the delivery of the curriculum. UK Graduate will continue to review the impact of e-learning upon the learner experience as an integral aspect of its quality assurance arrangements with the specific intention of identifying good practice and sharing it across the curriculum.

UK Graduate is currently developing a vast array of e-learning tools and resources which enables teachers and learners to be part of an immersive and dynamic learning process. Key Performance Indicators show that the majority of the curriculum areas are not using e-learning tools and more improvements will be made. UK Graduate will continue to assess quality, and consistency across the platforms that are used.

An extensive programme of staff development, based upon identified staff training needs, relating to the use of e-learning will be introduced to ensure that all staff, particularly teachers, have the necessary skills to successfully embed the use of learning technologies within their practice. UK Graduate will continue to work with external partners and consortia to ensure that learners benefit from the highest quality and most up to date e-learning resources and approaches.



## **21. Learner Voice**

UK Graduate will further develop its learner voice arrangements as an integral aspect of its quality assurance arrangements for FE and HE. Through involving learners, both individually and collectively, UK Graduate will ensure that it systematically collects and responds to learner views to strengthen teaching and learning and respond to individual need. Together with its learner representatives, UK Graduate will review the effectiveness and impact of its learner voice arrangements on the quality of the learner experience.

## **22. Minimum Standards**

UK Graduate has clear procedures in place to monitor performance on all programmes against Minimum Standards set by the ESFA.

The Minimum Standards for Apprenticeships consider the Overall Achievement Rate by level and framework code against a minimum expectation of 60%. Where the Overall Achievement Rate for a particular framework/level falls below 60%, all of the leavers on that framework are considered to be below the Minimum Standards threshold. The total leavers below the threshold are then considered against the overall cohort with the requirement that these must represent less than 40% of overall leavers, otherwise the Minimum Standard has not been met.

Although UK Graduate is not currently an ESFA provider, we are currently making the necessary improvements to give us the ability to apply for OfS and ESFA. For this reason, we are still planning to operate under the minimum standards set by the relevant bodies respectively.

## **23. FE Choices**

'New Challenges, New Chances', (the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2011), set out the Department's intention to develop a new FE Public Information framework. The framework consists of a set of basic information to be made available in a clear and consistent format by colleges and training providers and nationally collected and published data which will make use of Performance Indicators that measure aspects of performance such as:

- Achievement rates
- Views of learners and employers
- Learner destinations

UK Graduate uses the comparative data to judge its own performance and areas for improvement.

UK Graduate  
73 Greenfield Road,  
London, E1 1EJ

(+44) 0203 609 0260  
[info@ukgraduate.org.uk](mailto:info@ukgraduate.org.uk)  
[www.ukgraduate.org.uk](http://www.ukgraduate.org.uk)



**UK GRADUATE**  
power through education