



Borders College Approach to Quality Improvement

September 2023

History of Changes

Version	Description of Change	Authored by	Date
1	Update from 2019	Jayne Gracie	April 2022
2	Update roles & responsibilities	Lynne Gilchrist	May 2023
3	Update roles & responsibilities	Pitra McNeill	September 2023

Foreword by the Principal & CEO

“Following extensive consultation with staff, students, and external stakeholders, the Regional Board and the Executive Team of Borders College have developed key Strategic Ambitions and Action Plans, including:

- *Strategic Ambition 2020-2025*
- *Future Skills Strategy 2020-2025*
- *Sustainability Strategy 2020-2025*
- *Equalities Action Plan 2021-2025*
- *Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Students*

These Plans and Strategies articulate our strategic objectives, performance measures, values, and behaviours. In supporting the Plans and Strategies, Borders College recognises that it is essential that quality assurance and enhancement sits at the heart of what we do. More formally, it is a condition of grant that each college in Scotland takes responsibility for quality assurance and improvement within its own institution. The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and Education Scotland have a role to ensure, on behalf of Scottish Government and students, that institutional arrangements are effective.

For these reasons, we have designed our Quality procedures to meet the requirements of the SFC and correlate to the Education Scotland quality framework ‘How good is our college?’ (HGIOC?), encompassing:

- *Curriculum, learning and teaching, and assessment.*
- *Services to Support Learning for Staff and Students.*
- *Fair Access and Transitions.*
- *Partnerships and Collaboration.*
- *Evaluation to Facilitate Improvement.*

This is embedded in our approach to quality enhancement and encourages and supports a culture and ethos of quality.

The annual cycle for quality integrates self-evaluation with enhancement planning and performance, and links back to the Strategic Plans and Strategies. We set annual Strategic Priorities with a Supporting Action Plan and these, along with the Risk Register, Equality Action Plan 2021-2025 and the supporting College strategies all inform Borders College curriculum and department-wide enhancement planning.

Our approach to quality improvement relies on a continuous cycle of monitoring, planning, action, and evaluation. This ensures we can maintain the standards expected both locally and nationally and supports us to achieve the goals in our Strategic Plans and Strategies.”



Peter Smith
Principal & CEO, Borders College

Education Scotland's Quality Framework – How Good is Our College?

Education Scotland Quality Framework

Each year Education Scotland develop arrangements for assuring and improving the quality of provision delivered in Scotland's colleges based on How Good Is Our College (HGIOC). The framework provides a structure for evaluation and enhancement which Borders Colleges uses with their stakeholders to identify what is working well and what needs to improve. It is aligned to the Student Engagement Framework for Scotland and is based on four high level principles.

These are:

- Leadership and quality culture
- Delivery of learning and services to support learning
- Outcomes and impact
- Capacity for improvement

As part of our response to Education Scotland we must demonstrate a high level of reflection and evaluation, and this is why we have curriculum self-evaluation meetings.



Self-evaluation meetings (August, February and June)

These will be held on three occasions throughout an academic year. These are necessary to enable teams to consider what is going well, what needs to be improved and identify changes set by the regulatory or awarding body. There is an expectation for all the delivery team to attend.

The guide to Curriculum team meetings provides information to support curriculum teams to reflect, manage and plan the course. It provides space and time to consider programme content and delivery methods. It offers an opportunity to consider three-year trends on student success rates and enable discussion for change and improvement. The minutes of the meeting will enable subject areas to gather evidence to help in the production of the annual self-evaluation reports in line with the requirements of Education Scotland. It is essential students have representation at the February and June meetings and where possible our partners such as work placement providers. Staff are also requested to consider the student feedback questions from previous years.

While these meetings may seem complex, they are key for planning and development and are intrinsically linked to our key college's key strategies. Each year the college has a self-evaluation template completed by APs and Directors of Departments so your contributions at these meetings are invaluable for gathering information and producing evidence the APs use for the overall college self-evaluation. The annual cycle for quality enhancement integrates evaluative reporting with enhancement planning and performance management. This all links back to the Strategic Ambition 2020-2025 and Future Skills Strategy 2020-2025.

Tracking and Monitoring Meetings

These will be held monthly to discuss:

- Tracking and monitoring of student attendance and progress;
- Develop strategies to enable students to be successful;
- Monitor assessment progress against assessment schedule (this means lecturing staff are working to the agreed timeline of the assessment schedule).

Preparation for Academic Session Meetings

Time has been allocated to allow teams to fully prepare for the academic session. These meetings will take place during the first two weeks of an academic term (prior to full-time courses starting).

Examples of preparation undertaken:

- Staff understand and agree individual and course timetables and interdependencies (cross-referencing) for assessment;
- Update IV13 (in line with agreed course structures);
- Develop assessment schedules and upload to Canvas and ProSolution;
- Review and discuss KPI (Key Performance Indicators) from previous session (please contact MIS if you are unsure of what these are);
- Agree and finalise student induction;
- Meet with Student Support Team to discuss students with additional support needs and discuss and agree strategies to support these.

Training and Development

Training and Development and Continuing Professional Development for all staff plays a significant role in achieving our objectives for quality improvement. We provide an annual programme of Training and Development opportunities, prepared in response to individual and College needs identified, for example, through SPDRs and the College self-evaluation process.

Validation and Approval of Delivery

Borders College is an Approved Centre to run SQA and other awarding body provision. This means we have a responsibility to ensure that all our provision is valid, viable and able to meet the needs of our learners and meets awarding body standards.

The Approval Committee and Approvals Panels approve all assessed units and awards, to ensure that they meet with our internal and external requirements.

Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) and Credit Rating

The College can develop, credit rate and level locally devised awards only where there is no equivalent award available through a nationally recognised awarding body. The details of our approach are in SCQF Credit Rating – Procedures for Creating and Validating Awards, which follows the SCQF requirements.

Internal Verification

Borders College is an Approved Centre to run SQA and other awarding body provision. This means we have a responsibility to ensure that all provision is valid, approved and assessed to the national standard of the relevant awarding body.

We manage the quality of our delivery internally through Internal Verification, and the awarding bodies check this through External Verification. Our Internal and External Verification Policy and Procedure set out team member responsibilities in detail and are supported by supplementary guidance and forms.

Awarding bodies, by arrangement with us, periodically visit subject areas and externally verify learner work; in some cases, they request us to send samples of student work to them. This ensures that we meet the awarding body's standards and ensures maintenance of national standards.

Quality Audits

We carry out internal quality audits through the year.

Internal Verification Audit

The Internal Verification Audit enables us to sample our approach to internal verification, to ensure that we are carrying these out consistently and to an appropriate standard. This enables us to address and rectify any issues internally quickly before an external verifier identifies a problem. The outcome of the audit is shared with the curriculum team and discussed at the Learning and Teaching Committee.

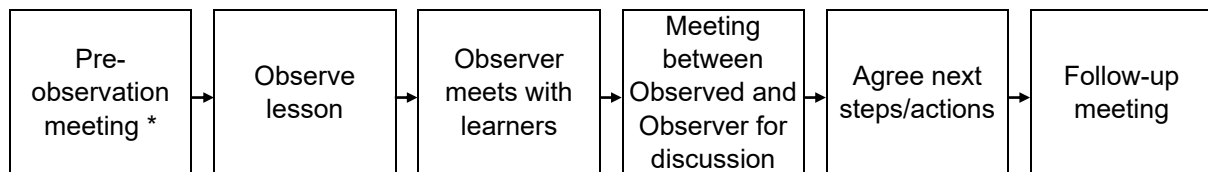
Learning and Teaching Audit

The Learning and Teaching Audit enables us to sample our approach to learning and teaching materials, again to ensure consistency of standards of approach and that a range of appropriate engaging materials are being used. The outcome of the audit is shared with the curriculum team and discussed at the Learning and Teaching Committee.

Learning and Teaching Observations

One of the methods through which we can support the direction of our Learning and Teaching and assess the quality of teaching and learning is Learning and Teaching Observations.

The Observations Process



*Pre-observation meeting – this can be completed as a one-to-one meeting on MS Teams.

Our Quality and Development Specialist (QDS) carries out an annual programme of observations that are developmental in approach, the lecturer and the observer working together to support, review and evaluate their own teaching practice. There is an opportunity for professional dialogue before the observation takes place.

Learners are involved in the process giving feedback on the lesson. The QDS and the Lecturer meet soon after the observation to discuss and mutually agree next steps or actions, and there is a further follow-up meeting to discuss progress. A summary of the lesson observation is forwarded to the Head of Sector (HoS) for discussion at a review meeting.

As well as being a supportive opportunity for lecturing staff, the observations enable the QDS to identify common themes arising out of them, which in turn generate wider training and development opportunities.

In a year where a lecturer is not due to have a developmental observation with the QDS they can either choose to participate in peer observation with a colleague or carry out a self-reflection and review of their own learning and teaching by recording themselves and reviewing this.

Learner Engagement

We aim to ensure meaningful learner engagement, to understand more about their learning and teaching needs and learners' perceptions of our delivery.

Each year Borders College Students' Association (BCSA) establish a Student Experience Committee (SEC). This is at the core of student engagement and feedback. A team of Student Representatives work with BCSA to collate student feedback on a range of student experience themes from their curriculum area. The SEC system focusses on collecting feedback enabling the College to identify and monitor issues that are representative of the broader student experience.

Learner Feedback on Curriculum

We collect learner feedback on the curriculum, evaluating at unit and course level, and support this process with a range of materials. We survey students on a regular basis using quick pulse surveys.

We also use a range of other mechanisms to collect feedback such as the Annual Learner Survey, Focus Groups with Promoted Lecturers (PL). [Student-Feedback-Procedure-2018.pdf](#)