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The new routes to Degree Awarding Powers

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QAA

Degree Awarding Powers Assessment by QAA

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The right to award UK degrees is a highly prized and legally protected privilege.

What we'll cover today

- Application routes
- Features of the new processes
- DAPs criteria
- Preparations for application
- Submission and supporting evidence
- Preparations for the assessment
- Assessment

Two application routes

- Full DAPs – must have a minimum three-year track record of delivering HE at level to which applying for powers
- New DAPs - intended for high quality providers without a three-year track record

Type of degree	Level	Type of powers
Doctoral degrees	Level 8	Research degree awarding powers
Research master's degrees	Level 7	
All taught degrees		
Bachelor's degrees	Level 6	Taught degree awarding powers (up to and including level 6)
Foundation degrees	Level 5	Foundation degree awarding powers

Subject-specific or all subjects; Time-limited > Indefinite

Features of new processes

- New, outcomes-focused DAPs criteria
- No fixed windows for applications
- Applications to OfS and referred to QAA for scrutiny
- Tailored to the provider's: experience, size, subjects, level of powers sought
- Increased focus on primary evidence and outcomes
- Assessment by experts, including use of specialist advisers and subject specialists where required
- Designed to align to OfS's overall approach to regulation

DAPs criteria

Overarching criterion

Academic community	Assurance of standards	Quality systems	When demonstrated
emerging self-critical, cohesive	clear commitment	effective (in prospect)	At application (New DAPs only)
self-critical, cohesive	proven commitment	effective	At application (Full DAPs) During and by end of probation (New DAPs only)

DAPs criteria

Detailed criteria

A: Academic governance

B: Academic standards and quality assurance

C: Scholarship and the pedagogical effectiveness of staff

D: Environment for supporting students

E: Evaluation of performance

Evidence requirements (outcomes)

DAPs criteria

How structured

- **Heading:** A: Academic governance
- **Criterion subheading:** A1 Academic governance
- **Actual wording** of the criterion: ‘An organisation granted ...has effective academic governance ...’
- **Explanation:** ‘There must be sound academic governance ...’
- **Evidence requirements** (outcomes):

*A1a: ‘Its higher education mission and strategic direction and associated policies are coherent, published, understood and applied consistently.’

*See unique identifiers (Annex 4, DAPs guidance for providers, QAA)

DAPs criteria

How applied

- Context of provider
- Different ways of demonstrating the outcomes
- Submission of evidence and scrutiny process focused on the subject(s) and level(s) for which powers are sought

Full Degree Awarding Powers

Preparations for application

Upfront preparation by the provider

- Must demonstrate meets all criteria in full at the point of application
- Not a developmental process - no longer an option for putting application into abeyance

Self-assessment

- Describes, analyses and comments on how the provider meets in practice the DAPs criteria associated with the powers sought
- Contextual information
- Academic calendar

Supporting evidence

- Existing evidence from internal processes
- Further evidence available during scrutiny period
- Evidence gathering by team throughout process (observations and meetings)

Preparations for assessment

- Once QAA has received the OfS's referral we will contact the provider to arrange an individual briefing
- Date for upload of provider's Self-assessment and supporting evidence
- Confirm next steps of the assessment process

Initial assessment

Purpose

Assess the credibility of the provider's self-assessment and supporting evidence as basis for the scrutiny process

Comprises

- A desk-based assessment
- Outcome and advice to the OfS

Scrutiny period

- Evidence gathering activities
 - Visits by team and individual assessors
 - Desk-based assessment
- Assessment of evidence submitted and gathered during the scrutiny period
- Report and advice to the OfS
- Report published by QAA after OfS decision has been made

New Degree Awarding Powers (New DAPs)

Preparations for application

Upfront preparation by the provider

- Overall arrangements to make awards at the level for which it has applied
- Approved process for, and approval of, proposed programmes
- Timings

New DAPs plan

- Explains how the provider meets or will meet the DAPs criteria in practice by end of probation
- Indicates opportunities for consideration of the provider's arrangements against the DAPs criteria by QAA – academic calendar
- Will be updated throughout probationary period (progress and changes to plan)
- Ease of comparison between different versions of the plan over time

New DAPs evidence

- Contextual information
- Existing evidence from internal processes that demonstrates some criteria, e.g. senior academic authority
- Further evidence about proposed programmes
- Evidence plan (demonstrating processes in operation and their outcomes during probationary period)
- Evidence gathering by team throughout process (observations and meetings)

Preparations for assessment

- Once QAA has received the OfS's referral we will contact the provider to arrange an individual briefing
- Date for upload of provider's New DAPs plan and supporting evidence
- Confirm next steps of the assessment process

New DAPs test

Purpose

- Assess the credibility of the provider's New DAPs plan
- Assess the provider's understanding of the DAPs criteria
- Confirm that the standards set for the provider's proposed courses are at an appropriate level

Details of approval of the proposed programmes

New DAPs test

Comprises

- a desk-based assessment in two stages
- use of subject specialist advice
- visit – 1-2 days, meetings and other activities
- report and advice to the OfS
- report published by QAA after OfS decision has been made

Probationary period: monitoring

Purpose

Confirm provider is:

- setting and maintaining academic standards securely
- making sufficient progress in implementing its New DAPs plan

Quarterly updates and annual self-evaluation reports

Notify QAA immediately any issues that may prevent it from fully implementing its plan

Probationary period: assessment

- Evidence gathering activities
 - Visits by team and individual assessors
 - Desk-based assessment
- Assessment of evidence submitted and gathered during the probationary period
- Report and advice to the OfS
- Report published by QAA after OfS decision has been made

Questions & Answers