The new routes to Degree Awarding Powers

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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
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of degree</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Type of powers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral degrees</td>
<td>Level 8</td>
<td>Research degree awarding powers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research master's</td>
<td>Level 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>All taught degrees</td>
<td>Level 6</td>
<td>Taught degree awarding powers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degrees</td>
<td>Level 6</td>
<td>Taught degree awarding powers (up to and including level 6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foundation degrees</td>
<td>Level 5</td>
<td>Foundation degree awarding powers</td>
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</tbody>
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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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic community</th>
<th>Assurance of standards</th>
<th>Quality systems</th>
<th>When demonstrated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>emerging self-critical, cohesive</td>
<td>clear commitment</td>
<td>effective (in prospect)</td>
<td>At application (New DAPs only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self-critical, cohesive</td>
<td>proven commitment</td>
<td>effective</td>
<td>At application (Full DAPs)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>During and by end of probation (New DAPs only)</td>
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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