

Annex 1

Aims, objectives and research questions

Aims

- To solicit information from employers about the criteria that they use to select graduates.
- To establish how the TQI web-site relates to employers' priorities, and what weighting they attribute to it.
- To explore employers' awareness of current information on quality and standards in higher education and proposals to revise methods of recording student achievement.
- To seek views from employers and related organisations about how/if they engage with the information in the TQI web-site and the NSS. For example, have employers used the TQI web-site or even looked at it? Are they thinking of using it, and if so, how? How reliable and user-friendly do they perceive it to be?
- To identify aspects of current information systems that fail to meet employers' needs e.g. omissions, complexity and reliability.
- To solicit views and advice from employers and related organisations on recommendations from the Burgess Report on recording student achievement.

Objectives

- To produce a summary of the range of current recruitment criteria utilised by employers and related organisations and identify the role, if any, that the TQI web-site does, or could, play in their decision-making processes.
- To provide evidence for the QAFRG about the impact and effectiveness of the TQI web-site for employers.
- To provide concrete recommendations from employers about the content, aims and dissemination of existing information sets on quality, standards and the recording of student achievement.

Research questions

1. What criteria do employers currently use to select graduates? E.g.
Qualifications: degree classifications, type of degree, reputation of the degree.
Individual qualities: general/specific competencies, previous work experience, extra curricular activities.
Quality of the HEI: research status of the HEI, quality of previous recruits, teaching quality.
2. What information do employers currently use in relation to quality, standards of courses, HEIs and student achievement in higher education?
3. What variations or commonalities in usage are there across different employment sectors and size of employing organisations?

4. How extensive is awareness of the existence of the TQI web-site among employers and related organisations?
5. Do employers know about/use the TQI web-site? If so, how do they use this information? For recruitment purposes? For staff development? For professional accreditation? How important is the information in relation to decision-making?
6. If employers do not use the information, why not? What would encourage them to do so?
7. Which aspects of the TQI data do they find particularly helpful? Which aspects are less helpful? What, in their views, is missing, incomplete or problematic? How do the views differ across sectors?
8. What information do employers and related organisations believe that they need to know about student achievement, curriculum content, and quality and standards in HE? What type of detail would be valuable?
9. What views do employers have on current practices for measuring and recording student achievement e.g. degree classifications? What would they like to change?
10. What views do employers have about the recommendations outlined in the Burgess Report e.g. personal development planning and a common higher education credit system?

Annex 2

Research instruments

1. Interview schedule used for face-to-face interviews

Introduction

Thank you very much for agreeing to be interviewed. As I said in my letter, this is part of a research project funded by HEFCE to ascertain the needs and views of employers for information about the quality and standards of higher education in England. As such, it is a piece of higher education policy research and we would like to feed your ideas and experiences into policy development. We are keen to explore your views on:

1. The criteria and processes that you currently use when you recruit graduates.
2. Your experiences/views on current public information provision about quality and standards in HE.
3. Any recommendations that you have for developing current public information provision.
4. Your views on the proposed changes to degree classifications.

Demographic data

1. Name of organisation.
2. Size of organisation.
3. Type of organisation (public/private: retail, catering, finance etc.).
4. Geographical location.
5. Number of graduates recruited each year.

Graduate recruitment

1. Could you tell me what your role is here in relation to graduate recruitment, please?
2. What changes, if any, have you noticed in the past five-to-ten years regarding graduate recruitment?
3. Could you tell me something about the processes that you use to recruit graduates? E.g. recruitment fairs, external advertisement etc.
4. How many graduates do you recruit each year? Do you recruit nationally, internationally, locally, regionally?
5. How are decisions made? Who is involved? Are there parallel and/or central processes? Is there a fixed brief? How much flexibility is there?

6. What sources of information about institutions do you currently use e.g. printed information about individual courses (provided by the institution and/or by newspapers/consumer guides etc.), programmes, research reputation, teaching quality reputation, quality scores?
7. How do these differ for i. new graduates ii. graduates four-to-five years into their careers?
8. How do you keep informed about the above factors other than candidate's application forms?

PROMPT: Employers' fora at institutions, outreach programmes, careers service, web-sites, grapevine knowledge etc.

9. What factors do you consider when you recruit new graduates?

PROMPT: Degree classification, reputation of the university where the candidate studied, subject knowledge, curriculum content, 'talent', potential, interpersonal skills, core skills e.g. communication, extra curricular activities, previous work experience and general and specific competencies.

10. May I ask you to rank these factors, please? (1-5, with 1 the most important and 5 the least important)
11. Which do you consider to be most important (check that the informant's views are congruent with practice)?
 - a. Degree classification.
 - b. Subject knowledge/relevance to the post.
 - c. Reputation of the university (research/teaching and learning).
 - d. Reputation of the course/professional accreditation status.
 - e. Quality scores e.g. RAE/institutional audit.
 - f. The candidate's previous work experience (including placements).
 - g. Interpersonal skills/team skills.
 - h. Dispositions e.g. 'talent', potential, flexibility, willingness to learn/cope with change.
 - i. Core skills e.g. communication and numeracy.
 - j. Work experience.
 - k. Supplementary skills e.g. a foreign language.
 - l. Evidence of practical/creative skills e.g. portfolios, digital work etc.
 - m. Post GCSE qualifications.
 - n. Other - please specify.
12. Do you use the internet for recruitment? How is this used e.g. for advertising, for screening? What types of criteria (do you use) to screen out candidates?

13. What information do you believe that you need to know about i. student achievement ii. curriculum content, iii. quality and standards in HE? What type of detail would be valuable?

TQI

1. *Have you heard of the TQI?*

If the answer is **yes**, please ask the following:

- a. Have you used it? If you have heard of it, but have not used it, why not?
 - b. For what purpose have you used it?
 - c. What do you think of it?
2. Which of the datasets have you found most helpful/least helpful? (HESA statistics on - student qualifications on entry, continuation, numbers of students graduating and with what award, employment/destinations data, NSS, external examiners' reports, links to QAA reports)
3. How would you describe it, in terms of:
- a. Its user friendliness?
 - b. Its reliability?
4. What, in your view, is missing, incomplete or problematic?

1. *Have you heard of the TQI?*

If the answer is **no**, please ask the following:

The TQI contains:

HESA statistics on - student qualifications on entry, continuation, numbers of students graduating and with what award, employment/destinations data, NSS, external examiners' reports, links to QAA reports.

2. Which of these datasets would you find most helpful/least helpful?

May I show you some printouts from the web-site?

3. How would you describe what you have seen of the TQI, in terms of:
- a. Its usefulness for your purposes?
 - b. Its user friendliness?
 - c. Its reliability?
4. What, in your view, is missing, incomplete or problematic?

Other HEI services

1. What other HEI services do you use i.e. CPD, staff development, training, customised programmes/courses?
2. How might the TQI be of use?

The Burgess Report

You may have heard that the Burgess Group is exploring possible alternatives to the current system of honours classification and is considering changes to the way in which student achievement is measured and recorded.

(Interviewer, please summarise what the Burgess Report is, if the informant is not familiar with it e.g. The Measuring and Recording Student Achievement Scoping Group (Burgess Group) was established by Universities UK and the Standing Conference of Principals (SCOP), with the support of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) in October 2003 to review the recommendations from the UK Government White Paper *The Future of Higher Education* relating specifically to recording student achievement, value added, degree classifications and credit systems.)

1. How satisfied are you with the current system of degree classifications?
2. Some of the options currently being explored are:
 - Status quo.
 - Sub-division of the 2.1.
 - A seven-point scale.
 - A nine-point scale.

What is your preference?

3. Would you like more/less detail about the degree? E.g. a summative assessment of Pass/Fail accompanied by information about course content (transcript); personal development portfolios?
4. What are your views on transcripts? (A transcript is a formal detailed record of achievement e.g. at module level.) What do you believe is essential information for transcripts? What do you believe is optional?
5. If degree classes were no longer classified, what impact would this have on your graduate recruitment procedures?

Conclusion

Finally, this is your opportunity to address policy-makers about any concerns/needs that you, as an employer, have in relation to information about quality and standards in HE provision.

1. Is there anything that you would like to say to us that we have not already discussed?
2. Do you have any further specific recommendations to the sector about information on quality and standards?

Thank you very much for your co-operation. We would be happy to send you a transcript of this interview for you to comment on, if you wish.

2. Employers' questionnaire

1. Name of your organisation.
2. Size of organisation, (small, medium, large).
3. Type of organisation (national, international, public, private).
4. Location of unit for which you are recruiting – county.
5. Sector.
6. Number of graduates recruited each year by you or your team.

SECTION A: Answer in regard to NEWLY QUALIFIED GRADUATES ONLY

Do you screen candidates on the internet? Yes ___ No ___

Do you shortlist candidates? Yes ___ No ___

If YES, how many minutes do you spend per candidate, on average ___ mins?

When shortlisting, how many of you normally scan for each person you select?

Do you get references? Yes ___ No ___

If YES, please specify when this is done?

before shortlisting ___, after shortlisting ___, or after interviewing ___ (check one response)

Do you use any tests of Intelligence ___(yes/no)
 Personality ___(yes/no)
 Other ___(yes/no) If YES, please describe below:

Do you interview candidates Yes ___ No ___ For how long? ___ mins

How many minutes, on average, do you spend per candidate after shortlisting?
 ___ mins (this includes preparation, interviewing and deciding)

What kinds of information do you use when shortlisting?

From the application form (TICK those that apply)

Class of degree Type of programme
Competencies Work experience
Non-academic activities

From references (TICK those that apply)

Confirmation of academic record Creativity
Personality Motivation
Analytic ability Inter-personal skills
Other

From your general knowledge of graduates and universities

(TICK those that apply)

Reputation of institution
Reputation of department
Reputation of programme
Experience with previous recruits

What kinds of evidence do you use in your final selection?

From the candidate — application form and interview

(TICK those that apply)

Performance at interview Class of degree
Type of programme Competencies
Work experience Non-academic activities
'A' level/other post GCSE qualifications Other

From references (TICK those that apply)

Confirmation of academic record Analytic ability
Creativity Personality
Motivation Inter-personal; skills
Other

From your general knowledge of graduates and universities

(TICK those that apply)

Reputation of institution
Reputation of department
Reputation of programme
Experience with previous recruits
Other

When considering a candidate's higher education record, how much attention do you give to:

Their institution Their achievement Their programme of study

Considerable	_____	_____	_____
Quite a bit	_____	_____	_____
A little	_____	_____	_____
None at all	_____	_____	_____

If you judge the quality of the institution, what criteria do you use? (check those that apply)

Its general reputation	_____
Its reputation for research	_____
Its reputation for teaching	_____
Subsequent performance of previous selected candidates	_____
Information provided by the institution	_____

Do applications give you sufficient information about student achievement in the form of:

	Class of degree	Competencies achieved	Knowledge acquired
Always	_____	_____	_____
Usually	_____	_____	_____
Occasionally	_____	_____	_____
Never	_____	_____	_____

Do applications give you sufficient information about a candidate's programme of study?

Always____, Usually____, Occasionally____, Never____

If you judge the particular programmes taken by candidates, which criteria do you use?

Reputation of the programme	_____
Content of the programme	_____
The department's reputation for research	_____
The department's reputation for teaching	_____
Subsequent performance of previous	_____
Selected candidates	_____

Information provided in print _____
 Information provided on the web _____

Can you please rank the following factors in order of importance?

Put **M** for **most important** and limit this to 4 factors

Put **F** for **fairly important** and limit this to 4 factors

Leave blank for **not important** or **not feasible**.

List of factors	When shortlisting	In final selection
Academic record	_____	_____
Subject knowledge	_____	_____
Technical skills	_____	_____
Communication skills	_____	_____
Team-working skills	_____	_____
Analytical skills	_____	_____
Problem-solving	_____	_____
Creativity	_____	_____
Willingness to learn and continue learning	_____	_____
Understanding of the world of work	_____	_____
Reputation of institution	_____	_____
Reputation of department	_____	_____
Quality of programme taken	_____	_____
Work experience	_____	_____
Foreign languages	_____	_____
Practical projects/portfolio	_____	_____

Information about the quality and standards of specific higher education programmes (including student ratings) is now appearing on the TQI web-site for

Teaching Quality Information

Have you ever visited this site? _____(yes/no)

Are you likely to visit this site for recruitment purposes in the future?
 _____(yes/no)

If unlikely, would this be because you are unlikely to use information about specific courses? Yes _____ No _____

Or because you would not have the time to look it up? Yes _____ No _____

Or, because you would not trust it? Yes _____ No _____

Other - please specify

SECTION B: Answer in regard to EXPERIENCED GRADUATES ONLY

When considering a candidate's higher education record, how much attention do you give to:

	Their institution	Their achievement	Their programme of study
Considerable	_____	_____	_____
Quite a bit	_____	_____	_____
A little	_____	_____	_____
None at all	_____	_____	_____

If you judge the quality of the institution, what criteria do you use? (check those that apply)

- Its general reputation _____
- Its reputation for research _____
- Its reputation for teaching _____
- Subsequent performance of previous selected candidates _____
- Information provided by institution _____
- Other - please specify _____

Do applications give you sufficient information about student achievement in the form of:

	Class of degree	Competencies achieved	Knowledge acquired
Always	_____	_____	_____
Usually	_____	_____	_____
Occasionally	_____	_____	_____
Never	_____	_____	_____

Do applications give you sufficient information about a candidate's programme of study?

Always____, Usually____, Occasionally____, Never____

If you judge the particular programmes taken by candidates, which criteria do you use?

- Reputation of the programme _____

Content of the programme _____
 Reputation of the department _____
 Subsequent performance of previous selected candidates _____
 Information provided in print _____
 Information provided on the web _____

In addition to their employment record and references, which of the following factors from their higher education record do you consider as important?

Put **M** for **most important** and limit this to 3 factors

Put **F** for **fairly important** and limit this to 3 factors

Leave blank for **not important** or **not feasible**.

List of factors	When shortlisting	In final selection
Academic record	_____	_____
Subject knowledge	_____	_____
Technical skills	_____	_____
Communication skills	_____	_____
Inter-personal skills	_____	_____
Analytical and problem solving skills	_____	_____
Creativity	_____	_____
Willingness to learn and continue learning	_____	_____
Reputation of institution	_____	_____
Reputation of department	_____	_____
Quality of programme taken	_____	_____

Information about the quality and standards of specific higher education programmes (including student ratings) is now appearing on the TQI web-site

Would you be likely to consult this web-site in the future for information about the programmes taken by experienced graduates _____(yes/no)

If NO, would this be because you are unlikely to use information about specific courses? Yes _____ No _____

Or because you would not have the time to look it up? Yes _____ No _____

Or, because you would expect it to be out of date? Yes _____ No _____

Other - please specify

Annex 3

Sample data

Table A: Web survey respondents

Name of company/organisation
Accenture
Adfero
Alten
Andy Bounds Ltd
Anthem Publishing
Arcadia
AstraZeneca
Astute Ltd
Atos Origin
Aviza Technology
Badenock and Clark
Bank of England
BBC
BDO Stoy Hayward
Brewin Dolphin Securities
Capita Symonds
Cerillion
Charities Advisory Trust
Computer People
Crawford and Company
Customer Systems plc
Cyril Sweett
Datamonitor
Deloitte
Dipsticks Research Ltd
DMH Stallard
EDS
Endsleigh
ENF Ltd
Enterprise Rent-a-Car
Estée Lauder companies
European Patent Office
European Personnel Selection office
Feba Radio UK
Financial Services Authority

Frazer Nash Consultants
Frontier
Gardiner and Theobald
GKN Aerospace Engineering Services
Graduate Recruitment Bureau
Hampshire Constabulary
Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service
Hamptons International
Hay Group
Huntress Search Ltd
Huxley Associates
Hydro-Dynamic Products Ltd
IBM
Illuminas
Jagex
JP Morgan
Kelly Scientific
Knowledge Intellect Tech
Lloyds TSB
Lockheed Martin
London Borough of Wandsworth
Macdonald Hotels
MacIntyre Hudson
Majestic Wine Warehouses
Manpower
Middlesborough Museums and Galleries
Motherwell Bridge Ltd
National Audit Office
Nationwide Building Society
Nortel
Northumberland County Council
Northumbria University
Nova Group
On Assignment Lab Support UK
Oyster Healthcare Communications Ltd
Peek Traffic
Powerlasr Ltd
PriceWaterhouseCoopers
Prudential UK
QuinetQ
Rarans
RES (Balfour Beatty Co)

RFS Ltd
RM
S3
Schlumberger
Scisys Ltd
SELEX Ltd
Siemens Traffic Control
Softel Ltd
ST Microelectronics
Stace Up
Standard Life
Storeys SSP
Student Guardian UK
Sunderland City Council
Sussex Institute
Tandberg Television Ltd
Taylor Woodrow
Teach UK
The Corporate Executive Board
Trayport
Vecta Software Corporation
War on Want
Watkin Jones and Son Ltd

Table B: Interview respondents

Name of company/organisation
AGR
American Express
Army
Atkins Global
BBC
BDO Stoy Hayward
Bristol City Council
Cogent
Corus Group
Deloitte
Environment Agency
Exxon Mobil
FDM
Freshfields Bruckhaus Teringer
Girlguiding Centre - Blackland Farm

Grant Thornton
Groundwork (Federation of Environmental Trusts)
ICAEW
ICI
KPMG
Ladbrokes
Lewes District Council
Mayo & Perkins
Mazars
Metskills
Mitchells & Butler
NHS
Overseas Development Institute
Pfizer
PricewaterhouseCoopers
Prison Service
Pro Skills SSC
Rolls Royce
Sector Skills Council
Semta SSC
Skillfast UK
Skills Active SSC
Skills for Logistics SSC
Teach First
West Sussex County Council
Zelus Recruitment Consultancy

Table C: Focus group participants

Name of company/organisation
AstraZeneca
Blue Fountain
Business and Tax Consultants
Business Bridge, Liverpool
Enterprise Rent-a-Car
Extensia
Graduate into Employment Unit
Heathcotes at Anfield
Innovation Centre, Sussex
Liverpool John Moores University Business Development Team
Liverpool John Moores University Careers Unit
PriceWaterhouseCoopers
Semantico
University of Sussex

Wirral Community Safety Team
Workbank
Year in Industry

Annex 4

The Top 20 lists

Table D: *The Guardian* Top 20 list

Rank	Institution	Average Guardian teaching score /100
1	Oxford	83.96
2	Cambridge	82.96
3	Imperial College	81.26
4	School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)	79.38
5	London School of Economics	79.32
6	King's College London	77.48
7	University College London	76.40
8	York	73.15
9	Warwick	72.90
10	Edinburgh	72.85
11	St Andrew's	72.68
12	Queen Mary, University of London	71.48
13	Bath	71.45
14	Manchester	71.17
15	Nottingham	71.16
16	Sussex	71.03
17	Aston	70.95
18	Surrey	70.79
19	Bristol	70.53
20	Cardiff	69.82

The ranking criteria are given at

<http://education.guardian.co.uk/universityguide2005/story/0,,1460614,00.html>

Table E: *The Times* Good University Guide 2007 - top universities 2007 league table

Rank	Institution	Total score
1	Oxford	1000
2	Cambridge	973
3	Imperial College	878
4	London School of Economics	855
5	University College London	819
6	Loughborough	795
7	Bristol	792
8	Warwick	791
9	Bath	786
10	Durham	778
11	Edinburgh	774
12	Royal Holloway	761
13	Aston	758
14	Nottingham	754
15	York	750
16	Cardiff	740
17	King's College London	733
=18	Leicester	732
=18	School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)	732
=18	St Andrew's	732

Source and ranking criteria are available at:
<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/section/0,,716,00.html>

Annex 5

Experienced graduates survey analysis

Total sample size = 77

Table F: When considering a candidate's higher education record how much attention do you give to the following

(% response)	Considerable	Quite a bit	Little or none
Their achievement n=76	58	28	14
Their programme of study n=74	26	32	42
Their institution n=77	14	33	53

Table G: Do applications give you sufficient information about student achievement in the form of the following?

(% response)	Always	Usually	Occasionally/ never
Class of degree n= 75	39	54	7
Competencies achieved n=75	12	63	25
Knowledge acquired n=72	14	53	33

Table H: Do applications give you sufficient information about a candidate's programme of study?

	Always	Usually	Occasionally / never
Do applications give you sufficient information about candidate's programme of study (%)	9	65	26

Table I: Which criteria are used to judge candidates programme of study?

	% using these criteria
n=48	
Reputation of the programme	52
Content of the programme	77
Reputation of the department	23
Subsequent performance of previous selected candidates	46
Information provided in print	21

Information provided on the web	17
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Figure A: Which criteria are used to judge candidates' programme of study?

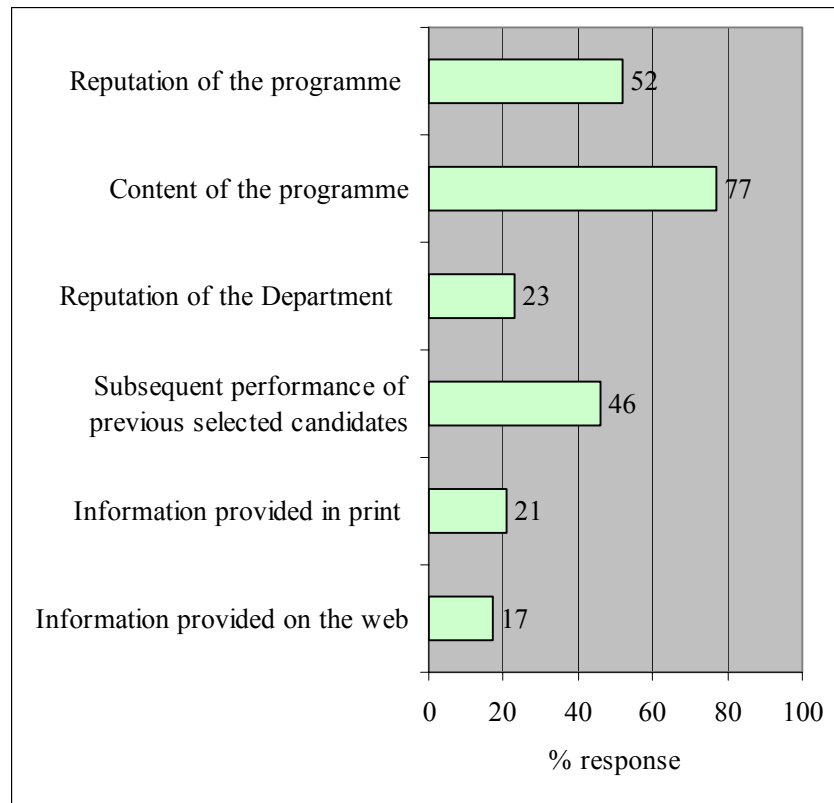


Table J: Most important factors when shortlisting and final selection

	Most important when shortlisting (%)	Most important in final selection (%)
n=93		
Academic record	53	23
Subject knowledge	35	28
Technical skills	37	27
Communication skills	56	62
Team-working and interpersonal skills	51	59
Analytical and problem-solving skills	29	38
Creativity	6	6
Willingness to learn	26	30
Reputation of the institution	5	4
Reputation of the department	2	1
Quality of programme taken	8	2

Table K: TQI - awareness and use of the web-site

	Likely	Unlikely
n=72		
Would you use this site for recruitment purposes in the future?	39%	61%
<i>Of those who answered unlikely this was because:</i> n = 44		
Unlikely to use information about specific courses?		77%
You would not have time to look it up?		50%
Other reasons (detailed below)		34%

Table L: Other reasons why respondents would be unlikely to use the TQI site for recruitment

Because the selection criteria set out for an EU competition differ significantly from the sift file procedures.
We would use a third party to qualify.
In recruitment we are mainly concerned that applicants hold the required qualifications and have additional experience and qualities.
Not relevant.
Academic opinions of student ability are of little relevance to the workplace. A first class degree will not automatically make a first class employee.
What the candidate has achieved is more important than the degree.
As people gain experience, the importance of the academic history decreases.
Not relevant in final decision - based on performance and actual skills not where studied.

Annex 6

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List of abbreviations

AGCAS	Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services
AGR	Association of Graduate Recruiters
BME	Black and minority ethnic
CDEC	Career Development and Employment Centre (at the University of Sussex)
CIHE	Council for Industry and Higher Education
CPD	Continuing professional development
DfES	Department of Education and Skills
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HE	Higher education
HEI	Higher education institution
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
HR	Human resources
NSS	National Student Survey
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
QAFRG	Quality Assurance Framework Review Group
RAE	Research Assessment Exercise
SCOP	Standing Conference of Principals
SME	Small- to medium-sized enterprise
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TQI	Teaching Quality Information
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service