



## **EUSA LLP**

Recognition Scheme for Educational  
Oversight Review by the Quality Assurance  
Agency for Higher Education

February 2016

## About this report

This is a report of a review under the Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at EUSA LLP. The review took place on 25 February 2016 and was conducted by a panel, as follows:

- Dr Terence Clifford-Amos
- Dr Elizabeth Briggs
- Dr David Gale.

The main purpose of the review was to:

- make judgements about the provider's delegated responsibilities for the management of quality and improvement of learning opportunities
- draw a conclusion about whether the provider's public information is reliable
- produce a commentary on how effectively the provider discharges its responsibilities for academic standards
- report on any features of good practice
- make recommendations for action.

A summary of the [key findings](#) can be found in the section starting on page 2. The [context](#) in which these findings should be interpreted is explained on page 3. [Explanations](#) of the findings are given in numbered paragraphs in the section starting on page 4.

The QAA website gives more information [about QAA](#) and its mission.<sup>1</sup> More information about this the review method can be found in the [published handbook](#).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us)

<sup>2</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication/?PubID=202](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication/?PubID=202)

## Key findings

The QAA panel considered evidence relating to the educational provision at EUSA LLP both information supplied in advance and evidence gathered during the review itself. The review has resulted in the key findings stated in this section.

## Judgements

The QAA panel formed the following judgement about EUSA LLP:

- **confidence** can be placed in EUSA LLP's management of its responsibilities for the quality of the learning opportunities.

The QAA panel also concluded that the provider satisfactorily manages its responsibilities for academic standards in accordance with the requirements of its awarding partners.

## Conclusion about public information

The QAA panel concluded that:

- **reliance** can be placed on the information that EUSA LLP produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

## Good practice

The QAA panel identified the following features of **good practice** at EUSA LLP:

- the organisation and integration of the programme evaluation process that provides effective communication between all partners (paragraph 1.6)
- the extensive pastoral and academic support given to students by teaching staff and managers (paragraph 2.7)
- the innovative use of graphical illustrations to communicate work-based competencies as part of personalised learning objectives (paragraph 2.11).

## Recommendations

The QAA panel makes the following **recommendation** to EUSA LLP. It would be desirable for EUSA LPP to:

- consider ways of extending access to library facilities, including the provision of work space, to meet the study needs of students (paragraph 2.16).

## Context

EUSA LLP (EUSA) is a UK-based not-for-profit educational organisation owned by Boston University. It provides academic work placement programmes for students from American universities across its sites in London, Dublin, Madrid, Paris and Prague. EUSA works in partnership with accredited US universities to provide a variety of customised programmes. Its mission and vision is 'EUSA designs and implements high quality, customised academic internship programmes that immerse our partners' students in new professional, social and linguistic cultures. Our work promotes the advancement of cultural understanding by integrating learning, working, and living abroad'.

Partnerships are governed by formal letters of agreement which outline responsibilities, terms and conditions for each party. Programmes are run on behalf of, and have the full backing of, individual universities; therefore, the universities remain involved throughout the course of a programme's development and delivery. EUSA develops and delivers academic courses; credit for these courses, including the work placement, is granted by the university partner. Programme outlines are confirmed with the partner each time a programme is run by EUSA. Partners, supported as appropriate by EUSA, have ultimate responsibility for student marketing, application and selection. Partners are encouraged to inspect and review programme delivery.

EUSA offers two programme models from which partners may choose. Under the EUSA Programme, the most frequent option, all aspects of the programme are delivered through EUSA; hence EUSA designs courses and associated assessments, submitting them for approval to the individual partner universities concerned. Under the Work Placement Only Programme all services other than internships, including visa sponsorship, housing, faculty and programme management, are provided by the home university. In London there were nearly 1,000 students in 2015.

The quality of the provision is managed by the Executive Director and Finance Director, who report to the Board of Representatives. There is a Management Team responsible for the quality, leadership and long-term planning, which includes the Academic Director and University Relations Director. Ultimate responsibility for the quality management of academic affairs, standards and structures lies with the Academic Committee, which also supervises the development and implementation of the Academic Policy Manual.

## Detailed findings about EUSA LLP

### 1 Academic standards

#### **How effectively does EUSA fulfil its responsibilities for the management of academic standards?**

1.1 EUSA's academic partners are responsible for the award of academic credit, all of whom are accredited by US institutions and recognised by the National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) for the UK. Programmes run for between eight and 16 weeks in which a credit-bearing work placement is also a feature and totals no more than 50 per cent of the programme. EUSA ensures that the requirements of each university partner are met and that syllabuses adhere to the required academic standards. EUSA's Academic Policy Manual (APM), to which partners contribute, is equally effective in communicating the role of EUSA in academic standards.

1.2 While responsibility for academic standards resides with the particular US faculty involved, considerable EUSA internal oversight takes place. The individual university partners are involved at all levels of preparation, delivery and evaluation. EUSA develops and delivers academic courses which, according to interest and demand, are written by academic staff, overseen by the Academic Director, and then agreed and finalised with partners. The APM states that internally developed and EUSA-approved syllabuses are then sent to the University Relations personnel who deliver them to the prospective partner universities for approval. There may be dialogue, normally with the Academic Director, and further modifications may be suggested before the syllabus is finally approved. Academic credit is agreed and, at the end of each course, letter grades awarded by EUSA are transferred into US credit awards.

1.3 EUSA has its own internal codes of practice on academic standards that relate to both academic courses and internship delivery. Partners have copies of these codes and are made fully aware of their function. Should any academic conflicts arise, these are effectively resolved between EUSA and the university partner.

1.4 Formal review of course delivery is undertaken twice a year by the Academic Committee. This process is supported by course evaluations written by individual students, by course feedback forms completed by faculty staff (a process introduced and implemented since the previous review in 2012), and by City Director Course Evaluation pro formas. The review of course delivery is also a rolling process in which EUSA acknowledges the active participation of students in their learning experience. EUSA ensures certain common standards across all its programmes through sampling a range of delivery processes and assessments to ensure comparability in standards.

1.5 Learning outcomes are drafted by faculty members and overseen by the Academic Director who checks and ensures that the learning outcomes are relevant and set at the right level so that syllabuses are fit for purpose. Students are made aware of the academic purpose and function of learning outcomes and lecturing staff respond to any ongoing queries about them. Students met by the panel confirmed their understanding of academic standards, learning outcomes and credit, and the course evaluation process. The City Director can consult with a university partner to agree any action that might be taken to ensure that students achieve the set learning outcomes, for example in relation to a placement, when timescales are short.

1.6 The evaluation of programmes is a two-stage process. Part one involves the local City Director, Operations Director and Academic Director, who have the opportunity to review delivery and record feedback. Part two initially involves the EUSA Operations Director

and then University Relations personnel who feed back their observations and commentary to EUSA. The Academic Director is also involved in part two of this process should partners recommend changes. The panel found that the end of programme evaluation reports based on student evaluations were very thorough. Senior staff were very positive about its successful working in the oversight of course delivery, academic standards and corporate governance. The organisation and integration of the programme evaluation process that provides effective communication between all partners is **good practice**.

1.7 The panel noted that good practice often emerges from students and cross-site evaluations, and attendance at conferences. These internal and external sources prove valuable to the academic standards' practices of EUSA. A key new development relating to academic standards, quality and good practice, concerns the new USA-based Advisory Committee set up with key partners and inaugurated in 2015.

1.8 To develop a more holistic appreciation of academic standards and related matters among faculty staff, a member of the freelance teaching staff has been included on a rotating basis in the academic management of EUSA. This involves attendance at two Academic Committee meetings and a one-year consultancy period in relation to this attendance. Teaching staff met during the visit endorsed this good practice as working well and to the benefit of the freelance faculty and community.

### **How effectively are external reference points used in the management of academic standards?**

1.9 External reference points are the responsibility of EUSA's partner universities and it is the responsibility of EUSA to satisfy the academic requirements of its academic partners. Assurance that this process takes place is provided through the syllabus-approval process. Partners will have been accredited by appropriate agencies and bodies in the USA.

1.10 EUSA has recognised, and been influenced by the previous *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning* (published by QAA) which, in particular, relates to placement activities and internships.

1.11 Other guiding external reference points include Boston University's Associate Director of Health, Safety and Security, the new EUSA Advisory Committee and its US partners, and the Forum on Education Abroad, which has established the 'Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad'.

### **How effectively does EUSA use external scrutiny of assessment processes to assure academic standards (where applicable)?**

1.12 EUSA works closely with its university partners in the approval and review of its courses to ensure all courses adhere to the partners individual academic standards. EUSA has its own codes of practice on academic standards to which partners contribute. While there is scrutiny by EUSA's Academic Committee, there is no external examining facility.

The panel has concluded that EUSA LLP satisfactorily manages its responsibilities for academic standards in accordance with the requirements of its awarding partners.

## 2 Quality of learning opportunities

### **How effectively does EUSA fulfil its responsibilities for managing the quality of learning opportunities?**

2.1 EUSA fulfils its responsibilities for the quality of learning opportunities as required by the letters of agreement with its partner universities. University partners visit EUSA to meet students, staff and faculty; to check facilities and resources; to sit in on lectures and inspect accommodation. Oversight of the local student learning environment is the responsibility of the City Director, reporting to the Operations Director who has ultimate responsibility. The City Director also liaises regularly with the EUSA Academic Director and University Relations.

2.2 Regular reporting and feedback to the Academic Committee and the Management Team ensures effective management and implementation of improvements to learning opportunities. The Operations Director is responsible for management of the quality of the delivery of programmes, liaising on a day-to-day basis with members of the Academic Committee, which conducts course reviews twice a year. These are informed by student course evaluations, faculty feedback and internship feedback. The recent appointment of the Internship Relations Director in London provides specific management oversight of the student learning experience in work-based and placement learning.

2.3 All policies and procedures relating to management of learning opportunities are documented and updated in the APM.

### **How effectively are external reference points used in monitoring and evaluation processes?**

2.4 EUSA responds effectively to the academic requirements and associated learning opportunities set by the partner universities for delivery of academic courses and internships. The new Advisory Committee provides additional support to inform EUSA of wider developments in US study abroad programmes.

2.5 Relevant parts of the Quality Code are monitored to ensure alignment, particularly in relation to the policies and comprehensive procedures for placement and work-based learning.

### **How effectively does EUSA assure itself that the quality of teaching and learning is being maintained and enhanced?**

2.6 EUSA draws on its structured processes for regular monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. Monthly status reports on matters relating to learning opportunities, with action plans, are forwarded by the City Director to the Executive Director and the Operations Director. Termly programme reviews and end-of-term reviews, incorporating student evaluations, faculty and supervisors' comments, are used to assess the overall student learning experience. These are sent to the University Relations Team in Boston, and are discussed by the Management Team and the Academic Committee for action planning. The panel identified the organisation and integration of the programme evaluation process that provides effective communication between all partners as a feature of good practice (see paragraph 1.6).

2.7 EUSA gives special attention to the performance of faculty staff as evidenced in student course evaluations. Survey results are shared with faculty to assess where improvements are required. The panel was provided with recent examples of how student feedback had informed changes in course delivery. Student feedback surveys show high

levels of satisfaction with their courses and the academic support from faculty. Students met by the panel commented very positively on the accessibility of and support from faculty staff and EUSA employees. The extensive pastoral and academic support given to students by teaching staff and managers is **good practice** (see also paragraphs 2.9 and 2.10).

2.8 Periodic feedback from students has enhanced the relationship between field trips and course content by the future inclusion of a faculty member on the field trips to clarify their context. Improvements are being introduced to the questions in student course evaluations to address the need to increase the submission rate.

### **How effectively does EUSA assure itself that students are appropriately supported?**

2.9 Extensive support is available to students through information on the website and the EUSA Student Gateway. Students receive a welcome pack and orientation programme including cultural immersion, pastoral care, academic courses and placement information on arrival. Students who met the team confirmed that the admissions process is straightforward and that they received a helpful orientation programme on arrival. Students have full access to staff during normal office hours, and an on-call system which operates 24 hours a day through the week. Emergency information is also available in the Student Health and Safety Essentials Handbook. Staff are informed about important potential student issues in the EUSA Emergency Handbook and EUSA Health and Safety Guidelines. EUSA engages the services of a qualified mental health counsellor to provide additional support to students.

2.10 EUSA continues to maintain and enhance support arrangements for the quality of learning for student internships, noted as a feature of good practice in previous QAA reports. The internship programme of work-based and placement learning is governed by comprehensive and effective policies and procedures to ensure that students receive a high quality experience. The Placement Manager has responsibility for liaising closely with students, their placement supervisors and companies involved. Students are guided through placement procedures from initial information on the EUSA website and Student Gateway portal prior to departure, to final acceptance of the chosen internship company and an evaluation on completion. EUSA publishes a series of portraits of typical London placements demonstrating the wide variety of previous internships. There is an online agreement for placement supervisors to clarify their roles and responsibilities, thereby ensuring consistency of the student placement experience. Placements are reviewed each semester using student feedback from evaluations and mid-term reviews.

2.11 For all programmes EUSA uses a Personalised Learning Objective Toolkit (PILOT) to assist students in identifying their learning objectives for the programme. The first surveys of participating students indicate that students recognise the value of the toolkit in their transferable skills development and personal learning objectives. EUSA has developed didactic illustrations and used text from student evaluations as a means of communicating competences and promoting skills. The innovative use of graphical illustrations to communicate work-based competencies as part of personalised learning objectives is **good practice**. Further training and development work is under consideration to improve even further the links between reflection activities and course assignments.

### **How effective are EUSA's arrangements for staff development in relation to maintaining and/or enhancing the quality of learning opportunities?**

2.12 EUSA appoints part-time faculty on a fixed-contract basis who are well qualified and have experience of teaching students on American study-abroad programmes. Appointed staff are inducted and given briefings on the programmes, including assessment and grading criteria, and on the backgrounds of students they will teach. Newly appointed staff are



observed in the classroom to ensure effective performance. The Academic Director provides continuing support to all faculty, who receive the Faculty Guidance Note on appointment.

2.13 There is a budget for formal and informal staff training and professional development, including attendance at conferences and training courses. Peer-to-peer training is used, for example to underpin PILOT objectives and to improve internship consultations.

2.14 EUSA operates a performance management cycle to provide feedback and assessment of staff performance.

### **How effectively does EUSA ensure that students have access to learning resources that are sufficient to enable them to achieve the intended learning outcomes of their programmes?**

2.15 The EUSA Student Gateway contains useful general information in addition to that which is published on the website. City Directors are responsible for ensuring that appropriate learning resources are available, and these are checked during site visits made by partner universities. EUSA provides core textbooks and electronic access to comprehensive journal collections.

2.16 Students who met the team commented that the availability of core textbooks is limited and that there is a need for a dedicated study space. Although the teaching room is at King's College, students have little opportunity to broaden their experience of study abroad by meeting and interacting with other students. While students are asked about their academic experience through course evaluations, the panel noted that the course evaluation process does not generally ask questions about the wider learning environment and resources available to students. It would be **desirable** for EUSA to consider ways of extending access to library facilities, including the provision of work space, to meet the study needs of students.

The panel has **confidence** that EUSA LLP is fulfilling its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of the learning opportunities it provides for students.

## **3 Public information**

### **How effective are EUSA's arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of information it has responsibility for publishing?**

3.1 EUSA's public information communicates the general services offered to partners and students covering all aspects of life on the programme, including academic work, work placement, accommodation, programme management, and logistical services. Information for students covers what is necessary concerning both living and studying abroad. A wide range of materials is available for partners to advise and prepare students. The website ([www.eusainternships.org](http://www.eusainternships.org)) is well constructed and comprehensive. This and the database are overseen by the Information Director, who has a key role in all aspects of public information. The Operations and University Relations Directors are collectively responsible for ensuring the accuracy of associated materials, which are in turn overseen by the Information Director.

3.2 The Information Director acts as webmaster and overall gatekeeper for all public information. Together with University Relations, the Operations Manager and local site teams, the Information Director ensures that all public information is reliable, factually

accurate and consistent in relation to print, web, social media activity, press relations and various audiences. EUSA regards the accuracy of information as being fundamental to the setting of realistic expectations in relation to partners and students. Associated materials available for publication, which are overseen by the Information Director, are the joint responsibility of the Operations and University Relations Directors.

3.3 Information and materials are made available to interested companies and placement supervisors who show an interest in working with EUSA and for prospective student work placements. There is a fully operative central database where all programme, student, placement, and company records are stored.

3.4 Following acceptance on to a programme, students are given a link to log into the EUSA Student Gateway. This secure portal enables students to propose placement preferences and goals, upload their CV, and a range of personal data. Students are able to download and agree to general conduct and placement conduct agreements as part of EUSA's online registration process. These documents are cross-referenced with the EUSA website and also documented in the printed Health and Safety Essentials Handbook.

3.5 Accepted students receive a set schedule of emails, including a programme schedule, housing arrangements, academic materials, visa application guidelines, and information specific to their individualised programme. Live online pre-departure webinars are conducted, which are also recorded and made available, and these include overviews of the programme. In London, dedicated online webinars are also conducted specifically for visa guidance. Students reported that visa guidance was very helpful.

3.6 Comprehensive information is provided for both prospective and active partners, and for the latter, an Advisor Toolkit is available. The publication of syllabuses appears rigorous and robust.

3.7 Syllabuses are agreed and signed off ready for partners months in advance of the student's arrival and should be available from EUSA two weeks before arrival. Names of lecturers are given on the syllabuses without biographical information, which is a detail that students who met the panel said they would appreciate. Academic information is extensive on arrival. Students are asked about the timeliness of all information in programme evaluations and whether all information, including academic information, is sufficient and understood. Should there be any last minute changes, such as a change of faculty freelance staff, approval is sought for the change from the sending institution and students are immediately made aware of the new plans. The panel reviewed one recent example which had been effectively managed.

3.8 For information about EUSA, students met by the team tended to rely on their own university website, their study abroad office and faculty/school, and other websites rather than the EUSA website. Where there were concerns in terms of information being received in a sufficiently timely manner, for example, pre-arrival academic syllabus material and log-in details to access a software programme needed for one of the courses, this would appear to the responsibility of their home university to communicate information which had been supplied well in advance by EUSA.

3.9 The teaching staff described the syllabus review process as an annual exercise, for which a deadline is set for completion. The Academic Director oversees this work and is in regular contact with freelance faculty members. Partner websites are audited by University Relations personnel. Teaching staff interviewed were content with the quality of public information for all participants, stating that in their view student expectations were not only met but often exceeded.

The panel concludes that **reliance** can be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that EUSA LLP is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

## 4 Action plan<sup>3</sup>

EUSA LLP action plan relating to the Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight in February 2016						
Good practice	Intended outcomes	Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes	Target date(s)	Action by	Reported to	Evaluation (process or evidence)
The review panel identified the following areas of <b>good practice</b> that are worthy of wider dissemination within EUSA:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the organisation and integration of the programme evaluation process that provides effective communication between all partners (paragraph 1.6)</li> </ul>	To expand the internship supervisor evaluative process, seeking feedback not only on satisfaction with the performance of the intern, but also satisfaction with the 'match' made between the student and the organisation, and the experience of working with EUSA	Review and develop Supervisor Evaluation to include new questions	Trial with autumn 2016 students	Operations Director, Information Director, City Directors	Management Team	Supervisor Evaluations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the extensive pastoral and academic support given to</li> </ul>	1 To further enhance academic guidance for students	1 Development of Academic Handbook for students	1 May 2016	1 Academic Committee, Operations Director, City	1 Operations Director, Academic Committee	Student end of programme evaluations, university partner

<sup>3</sup> EUSA LLP has been required to develop this action plan to follow up on good practice and address any recommendations arising from the review. QAA monitors progress against the action plan.

<p>students by teaching staff and managers (paragraph 2.7)</p>	<p>2 To provide an additional outlet for students to comment confidentially on any element of programme delivery</p> <p>3 To identify earlier when additional academic or pastoral support is needed</p>	<p>2 To have a student rep for any programme with 20 or more students</p> <p>3 EUSA has a new 'extenuating circumstances policy'; when a student meets the criteria for allowances to be made, the City Director will routinely access whether any additional help, whether pastoral or academic, is needed</p>	<p>2 Spring 2017</p> <p>3 May 2016</p>	<p>Directors</p> <p>2 City Directors</p> <p>3 Academic Committee, Operations Director, City Directors</p>	<p>and Academic Director</p> <p>2 Operations Director</p> <p>3 Operations Director and Academic Director</p>	<p>feedback, student and faculty course evaluations</p>
<p>• the innovative use of graphical illustrations to communicate work-based competencies as part of personalised learning objectives (paragraph 2.11).</p>	<p>1 Raise awareness of PILOT among the student cohort</p> <p>2 Increase engagement and completion rates of PILOT</p> <p>3 Increase awareness and develop a stronger understanding of the benefits of PILOT among staff members</p>	<p>1 Integration of graphics into presentations, orientations, webinars, and website by October 2016</p> <p>2 New graphics to be developed continuously with focus on emphasising the value of the process and in particular the Personal Learning Statement</p> <p>3 Posters for EUSA offices reflecting the graphics</p>	<p>1 Ongoing in 2016</p> <p>2 October 2016</p> <p>3 February 2017</p>	<p>Information Director, Operations Director, City Directors</p>	<p>Management Team</p>	<p>Completion levels of PILOT process, student and university partner feedback via review cycle</p>

Desirable	Intended outcomes	Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes	Target date/s	Action by	Reported to	Evaluation (process or evidence)
The panel considers that it would be <b>desirable</b> for EUSA to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>consider ways of extending access to library facilities, including the provision of work space, to meet the study needs of students (paragraph 2.16).</li> </ul>	EUSA will reevaluate the extent to which its current provision of learning materials, and the learning space to absorb these materials effectively, are fit for purpose	New questions relating to these issues will be included on the Course and Student Programme Evaluation forms for summer 2016 and considered at the Academic Committee in September 2016 and then again in April 2017	May 2016 for questions and to collect data over summer 2016 and spring 2017 semesters (because of numbers of students at these times)	Academic Committee (in Sept 2016 and April 2017) and then on to Management Committee in spring 2017 to consider any budgetary implications or recommendations made	Academic Committee & Management Team	Student course evaluations, Student end of programme evaluations, City Director course evaluations

## Glossary

This glossary explains terms used in this report. You can find a fuller glossary at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/glossary](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/glossary). More details and formal definitions of key terms can be found in the [handbook](#)<sup>4</sup> for this review method.

**Academic quality** A comprehensive term referring to how, and how well, higher education providers manage teaching and learning opportunities to help students progress and succeed.

**Academic standards** The standards set and maintained by degree-awarding bodies for their courses (programmes and modules) and expected for their awards. See also **threshold academic standard**.

**Credit(s)** A means of quantifying and recognising learning, used by most institutions that provide higher education programmes of study, expressed as 'numbers of credits' at a specific level.

**Enhancement** The process by which higher education providers systematically improve the quality of provision and the ways in which students' learning is supported. It is used as a technical term in QAA's review processes.

**Good practice** A process or way of working that, in the view of a QAA review team, makes a particularly positive contribution to a higher education provider's management of academic standards and the quality of its educational provision. It is used as a technical term in QAA's review processes.

**Learning opportunities** The provision made for students' learning, including planned study, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, and resources (such as libraries and information systems, laboratories or studios).

**Learning outcome** What a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completing a process of learning.

**Programme (of study)** An approved course of study which provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads to a qualification.

**Public information** Information that is freely available to the public (sometimes referred to as being 'in the public domain').

**Widening participation** Increasing the involvement in higher education of people from a wider range of backgrounds.

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Southgate House, Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1UB  
Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

Tel 01452 557050  
Web [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)

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<sup>4</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication/?PubID=202](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication/?PubID=202)