



# Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) of Leo Baeck College

November 2016

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## About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Leo Baeck College. The review took place from 28 to 29 November 2016 and was conducted by a team of two reviewers as follows:

- Professor Hastings McKenzie
- Ms Alexa Christou.

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provided by Leo Baeck College and to make judgements as to whether or not its academic standards and quality meet UK expectations. These expectations are the statements in the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) (the Quality Code)<sup>1</sup> setting out what all UK [higher education providers](#) expect of themselves and of each other, and what the general public can therefore expect of them.

In Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) the QAA review team:

- makes judgements on
  - the maintenance of academic standards
  - the quality of student learning opportunities
  - the information provided about higher education provision
  - the enhancement of student learning opportunities
- makes recommendations
- identifies features of good practice
- affirms action that the provider is taking or plans to take.

A check is also made on the provider's financial sustainability, management and governance (FSMG) with the aim of giving students reasonable confidence that they should not be at risk of being unable to complete their course as a result of financial failure.

A summary of the findings can be found in the section starting on page 2. [Explanations of the findings](#) are given in numbered paragraphs in the section starting on page 5.

The QAA website gives more information [about QAA](#) and its mission.<sup>2</sup> A dedicated section explains the method for [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\)](#).<sup>3</sup> For an explanation of terms see the [glossary](#) at the end of this report.

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<sup>1</sup> The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code)

<sup>2</sup> QAA website: [www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us).

<sup>3</sup> Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers): [www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/Educational-Oversight.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/Educational-Oversight.aspx)

## Key findings

### QAA's judgements about Leo Baeck College

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at Leo Baeck College.

- The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of the degree-awarding body **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of the information about learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The enhancement of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

### Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations** to Leo Baeck College.

By July 2017:

- ensure that the formal annual review of the Haifa component is included in the annual monitoring report of the programme as a whole (Expectations B8 and B10)
- ensure that external examiners receive draft examination papers in advance in line with awarding body regulations (Expectation B7).

### Affirmation of action being taken

The QAA review team **affirms** the following actions that Leo Baeck College is already taking to make academic standards secure and/or improve the educational provision offered to its students:

- the work being undertaken in the quinquennial review to increase the synergy between the academic and vocational action elements of the programme (Enhancement).

### Financial sustainability, management and governance

The provider has satisfactorily completed the financial sustainability, management and governance check.

Further explanation of the key findings can be found in the handbook available on the QAA webpage explaining [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\)](#).

## About Leo Baeck College

Leo Baeck College (the College) is a Jewish theological college based in Finchley, North London within the Sternberg Centre for Judaism. The overall mission of the College is to train rabbis and educators for the UK and European Progressive Jewish communities.

Cohorts at Leo Baeck College are small as the College serves to produce an appropriate number of rabbis to serve the UK Progressive community. For this reason the College does not plan to increase student numbers significantly, although numbers have increased gradually over the last few years. There were 22 students in 2015-16 and this has increased to 25 (20 rabbinic and five Jewish education students) in 2016-17.

The College had to find a new awarding body to validate all of its provision following the withdrawal of its previous awarding body, the University of Winchester, for strategic reasons. The College now works with Middlesex University and had all its programmes validated by the new awarding body in July 2015 and January 2016.

The majority of students are on a five-year programme leading to ordination, in which they study four awards. The four awards are:

- Graduate Diploma in Hebrew and Jewish Studies, Part 1 (level 6)
- Graduate Diploma in Hebrew and Jewish Studies, Part 2 (level 6)
- Postgraduate Diploma in Hebrew and Jewish Studies (level 7)
- MA in Applied Rabbinic Theology (level 7).

Major changes since the last review include the change of awarding body, the ending of the BA in Jewish Education and its replacement with a new Certificate of Higher Education in Jewish Education. The College has appointed a permanent part-time post of Head of Vocational Studies and a permanent part-time Senior Lecturer in Biblical Hebrew and Targumic Aramaic. The College has also created a bespoke Study Abroad programme in Haifa, Israel, for rabbinic students.

The major challenge for the College is the uncertain financial circumstances faced by a small privately funded college serving a fairly small community, although the newly created Head of Fundraising post has seen contributions to Leo Baeck College rising steadily.

The College has made good progress with addressing the outcomes of its Review for Educational Oversight in October 2012, including implementing a Strategy for Electronic Communication, rationalising quality assurance processes, and bringing together existing arrangements in a handbook for placement learning.

## Explanation of the findings about Leo Baeck College

This section explains the review findings in more detail.

Terms that may be unfamiliar to some readers have been included in a [brief glossary](#) at the end of this report. A fuller [glossary of terms](#) is available on the QAA website, and formal definitions of certain terms may be found in the operational description and handbook for the [review method](#), also on the QAA website.

# **1 Judgement: The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies and/or other awarding organisations**

**Expectation (A1):** In order to secure threshold academic standards, degree-awarding bodies:

**a) ensure that the requirements of *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* are met by:**

- **positioning their qualifications at the appropriate level of the relevant framework for higher education qualifications**
- **ensuring that programme learning outcomes align with the relevant qualification descriptor in the relevant framework for higher education qualifications**
- **naming qualifications in accordance with the titling conventions specified in the frameworks for higher education qualifications**
- **awarding qualifications to mark the achievement of positively defined programme learning outcomes**

**b) consider and take account of QAA's guidance on qualification characteristics**

**c) where they award UK credit, assign credit values and design programmes that align with the specifications of the relevant national credit framework**

**d) consider and take account of relevant Subject Benchmark Statements.**

**Quality Code, Chapter A1: UK and European Reference Points for Academic Standards**

## **Findings**

1.1 The College develops its programmes and curricula with reference to *Chapter A1* of the Quality Code. Middlesex University (the University) is responsible for setting the academic standards that are maintained by the College. The College follows the University's policy for development and approval of programmes, as well as its specification. Responsibility for the validated programmes at the University lies with its School of Law.

1.2 The College currently has six programmes validated, four in Jewish Studies that combine to form the academic side of the rabbinic studies route, and two in Jewish Studies. Programmes can be studied independently although most students are enrolled on Jewish Education programmes as part of their rabbinic training. All of the degree programmes were revalidated in July 2015 and in January 2016 by the University. At this time a BA in Jewish Education was withdrawn in favour of a CertHE in Jewish Education.

1.3 The four awards in Jewish Studies comprise: a Graduate Diploma of Hebrew and Jewish Studies, Part 1 (level 6); a Graduate Diploma of Hebrew and Jewish Studies, Part 2 (level 6); a Postgraduate Diploma of Hebrew and Jewish Studies (level 7); and an MA in Applied Rabbinic Theology (level 7 and for Rabbinic students only). Each is normally studied full-time over one year with the exception of the MA, the completion of which takes two years.

1.4 The Jewish Education awards include a Certificate of Higher Education in Jewish Education at level 4 and an MA in Jewish Educational Leadership at level 7. These awards started from September 2016, by which time the College had finished teaching out the MA Jewish Education award validated by its previous awarding body, the University of Winchester.

1.5 The programmes are mapped against *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) to confirm the level of each award. One hundred and twenty credits are required for completion of the Graduate and Postgraduate Diplomas while the MAs require 180 credits to complete, in line with the *Master's Degree Characteristic Statement*.

1.6 Programme specifications explicitly map learning outcomes at programme level and map modules against credit. The College's marking schemes are also referenced against the FHEQ level descriptors. External reference points cited in handbooks include qualification descriptors; QAA Subject Benchmark Statements for Education Studies, Languages, Cultures and Societies, and Theology and Religious Studies; and the academic practice of similar institutions, assemblies and associations in the US and Israel in relation to codes of conduct and standards in professional life.

1.7 The design of the process through which the programmes validated by the degree-awarding body, the University, have been designed, developed and approved would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.8 The review team tested the Expectation by reviewing all of the evidence provided and by meeting and questioning staff, students and alumni.

1.9 All qualifications, with the exception of the two Graduate Diplomas in Hebrew and Jewish Studies, meet the minimum credit specified in the credit framework for England. Both Graduate Diplomas exceed the minimum credit requirement by 40 credits. The College expressed the view that the purpose of each diploma and its additional credit was to help prepare students for subsequent stages of their rabbinic training and careers.

1.10 The review team concludes that the programmes are benchmarked against appropriate external reference and frameworks. The College also adheres to the processes of its awarding body when designing, developing and approving programmes. Although the additional credit required to achieve the College's Graduate Diplomas in effect places additional learning demands upon students, the College is able to ensure that the threshold academic standards of the degree-awarding body are met for all awards. Consequently, the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

**Expectation (A2.1): In order to secure their academic standards, degree-awarding bodies establish transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern how they award academic credit and qualifications.**

**Quality Code, Chapter A2: Degree-Awarding Bodies' Reference Points for Academic Standards**

**Findings**

1.11 The University's Academic Board is ultimately responsible for sanctioning programme approval and re-approval. The learning outcomes, associated Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, and the volume and level of credits for each award are scrutinised by the University during the approval process to ensure that they comply with its academic framework.

1.12 The College defers to the regulations of the University except in areas where it has been given permission to use its own. In such cases the College defines its own processes and procedures that are adapted to meet the University's requirements. These regulations are considered and formally approved by the University's Academic Registrar, for example the College's regulations on assessment and for Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL). If there is any doubt over which regulations apply, then the College complies with the University's expectations. The applicable regulations are clearly described in part 2 of the Faculty Handbook, which is regularly updated.

1.13 The College's Academic Board, to whom groups/committees including the courses teams and academic quality and examination boards are accountable, has authority over all academic and vocational affairs of the College. It maintains oversight of the College's delegated responsibilities for the maintenance of standards primarily through the confirmation of assessment marks and programme classifications at the Examinations Board, chaired by the University Link Tutor. These boards operate in accordance with the University's regulations and require subsequent confirmation from their Academic Board. The University therefore holds overall responsibility for setting and securing the academic standards of the programmes delivered by the College.

1.14 The design of the academic governance arrangements and framework would enable the Expectation to be met.

1.15 The team reviewed the evidence base provided by the College and was able to meet and question staff from the University and the College in order to reach its conclusions.

1.16 The processes by which academic standards are secured primarily rely upon the academic framework of its degree-awarding body, the University. Consequently, where aspects of regulation are delegated there remain mechanisms of effective oversight that enable the University to ensure that standards are upheld. For example, Accreditation of Experiential Prior Learning (APEL) requests are considered by the College in accordance with their procedures prior to referral to the Collaborative Programme Accreditation Board, chaired by the Link Tutor. Decisions made by this board also require approval from the external examiner. The Link Tutor also chairs the Examinations Board and decisions are reported to the Academic Board of the College and confirmed by the University's Academic Board.

1.17 Staff have a clear understanding of the College's committee structure and are confident in the detail and the use of the College's and the University's regulations. The College also works closely with the Link Tutor who, through the responsibilities

of the role, is able to oversee key aspects of the joint academic governance framework. As a consequence, the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**

**Level of risk: Low**

**Expectation (A2.2): Degree-awarding bodies maintain a definitive record of each programme and qualification that they approve (and of subsequent changes to it) which constitutes the reference point for delivery and assessment of the programme, its monitoring and review, and for the provision of records of study to students and alumni.**

**Quality Code, Chapter A2: Degree-Awarding Bodies' Reference Points for Academic Standards**

**Findings**

1.18 Programme specifications consistently follow the University's template and provide a definitive and up-to-date record of each programme, and student handbooks provide a comprehensive information set for students, including relevant module descriptors. The College maintains a complete record of programme specification changes to keep track of the modifications in accordance with the University's procedures. Student handbooks contain information for students on certificates, graduation and ordination and the College keeps detailed electronic records of the students' results and classifications. Degree certificates and Diploma Supplements are prepared by the University, based on details provided by the College and verified by the former in accordance with the Memoranda of Cooperation. These memoranda also confirm the monitoring and review cycles that operate in accordance with the University's cycles with review at an interval of six years while monitoring is conducted on an annual basis.

1.19 The College's definitive programme information is consistent with the expectations of the University and the processes in place enable the Expectation to be met.

1.20 The review team tested the Expectation by reviewing evidence provided by the College and by meeting University and College staff, students from across all programmes, and placement providers.

1.21 While programme specifications provide a definitive record of each programme only passing reference is made to the vocational requirements of the rabbinic study route in programme level outcomes. Two additional handbooks are provided, which detail the vocational placements and courses that must be completed successfully in order to progress through the study pathway. This vocational element increases in intensity through the five-year, full-time study route and records of the progress made are kept by the Dean of the College. As such these vocational handbooks, in company with the student handbooks and programme specifications, effectively provide the full set of definitive documentation that defines the qualifications. The review team learned from the rabbinic students that they were made aware of the academic and vocational demands of the programme prior to and during application but it was evident that rabbinic students are at times subjected to an intense workload that is not immediately clear in the programme definitive documentation.

1.22 The College takes care to produce a thorough and up-to-date set of information for its students and prospective applicants. The review team concludes that the vocational requirements of rabbinic study, while separate from the academic requirements, are understood by students. The College follows University templates and approval processes in maintaining the definitive records, which provide a sound reference point for delivery, assessment, monitoring and review of programmes. Therefore the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

**Expectation (A3.1): Degree-awarding bodies establish and consistently implement processes for the approval of taught programmes and research degrees that ensure that academic standards are set at a level which meets the UK threshold standard for the qualification and are in accordance with their own academic frameworks and regulations.**

**Quality Code, Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards**

**Findings**

1.23 The College complies with the processes for the design, development and approval of taught programmes specified by the University. Validation of programmes is through the Academic Provision Approval Committee, which establishes a panel to deliberate on matters of viability and student demand, availability of resources, and academic quality and standards. Two validation events in July 2015 and January 2016 allowed panels to meet relevant senior staff of the University and College and the College's Programme Team. Each panel included two external assessors with appropriate subject expertise, an academic from a higher education institution and a practising Rabbi from a Reform or Liberal Synagogue, and considered an appropriate range of programme documentation and relevant external benchmarks.

1.24 Additional documentation confirms the undertaking by the University of a due diligence process of the College's financial condition, and Memoranda of Cooperation agreed between the University and College are in place to provide clarity on approved localised practices relative to the University's regulatory framework. A Memorandum of Cooperation formalises the relationship between the College and University of Haifa to provide learning opportunities abroad for College students. There was evidence of consultation by the curriculum development team with external examiners during the design process. The processes in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.25 The review team considered the design of the programmes and the validation process in light of the documentation and information provided to prospective students, evidence of mapping to academic level descriptors and the programme specifications. The review team met the University's Link Tutor and senior staff of the College to discuss the programme design, content and structure and how questions about volume of study raised during the validation process and through the student submission had been addressed. These matters were also discussed with the teaching team and at a meeting to which all students were invited.

1.26 The evidence shows that the approval process is comprehensive and rigorous. The validation panels looked in detail at the module and programme specifications. For example, they identified good practice in the articulation of learning outcomes for some modules but also highlighted the need to review others to reflect more consistently the appropriate level of academic challenge and to link explicitly with the module assessment criteria. The review team confirmed that this was achieved through the comprehensive mapping of learning outcomes for the MA in Jewish Educational Leadership modules against level 7 descriptors. The reports are detailed and provide clarity on the progression of students through the programmes, the College's commitment to research-led teaching and the approach to student-led research, and further opportunities for collaboration between the College and the University on research and curriculum development. The final conditions and recommendations for approval are made explicit and the review team saw evidence of how these had been met. For example, the validation panel required that details of the Haifa component of study be included in the Course Handbook for the Graduate Diploma in Hebrew and Jewish Studies, Part 2 and that all semester two modules be identified as

optional. The Study Abroad module was developed to incorporate this work. Students continue to study the Hebrew language and Rabbinic Literature while abroad, and take two electives to complete the Haifa component. This programme replaces three of the taught modules taken by students unable to travel to Israel.

1.27 The review team are satisfied that the processes for the approval of taught programmes at the College ensure that academic standards are set at a level which meets the UK threshold standard for the qualification and are in accordance with the University's own academic frameworks and regulations. Therefore the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

**Expectation (A3.2): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that credit and qualifications are awarded only where:**

- **the achievement of relevant learning outcomes (module learning outcomes in the case of credit and programme outcomes in the case of qualifications) has been demonstrated through assessment**
- **both UK threshold standards and their own academic standards have been satisfied.**

**Quality Code, Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards**

**Findings**

1.28 In designing, teaching and assessing its awards, the College seeks to enable students to attain and demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes at module and programme level. This includes making reasonable adjustments for students with protected characteristics in consultation with the University. The College has approved regulations that are partially adapted from the University's assessment regulations. Programme specifications explicitly map learning outcomes at programme level and demonstrate how learning outcomes at module level support their achievement. Module descriptors specify module aims and learning outcomes, academic level and credit weighting. The assessment strategy is clear and generic assessment criteria are included in the descriptors.

1.29 Internal examiners use assessment criteria and marking schemes to determine the standard achieved, and non-blind double marking is in place for all assessed work whose value exceeds 20 per cent of the total mark, both written and oral. External examiners have sight of assessed student work and the associated instruments post-assessment to verify standards, the assessment process and its adherence to University regulations. External examiners do not see the exams before they are sat.

1.30 The College's Examinations Board is chaired by the University's Link Tutor, with membership and remit set by them. Disagreements regarding outcomes are resolved through one member one vote with the Chair holding the casting vote, although the College reports that this has never occurred. The College submits details of the Board outcome to the Centre for Academic Partnerships at the University. These are then confirmed by the University.

1.31 Students on the Haifa Study Abroad semester are required to meet the assessment requirements of the modules for which they are registered. A transcript with grades is provided by the University of Haifa in readiness for the College's Examinations Board, where they are confirmed. The processes for awarding academic credit enables this Expectation to be met.

1.32 The review team considered a variety of material, including information provided to students on the virtual learning environment (VLE), to explore the clarity with which learning outcomes are expressed and the extent to which students are guided to fully understand expectations of them in assessment. Discussions with staff and students also addressed these matters.

1.33 The review team confirmed that more detailed assessment criteria are provided in the programme handbooks for Jewish Education and Jewish Studies, facilitating a consistent approach to appropriate differentiation in levels of performance. Only two of the vocational modules are assessed for credit in the final year of the MA Applied Rabbinic Theology. The review team discussed the intensity of the programme with staff and students, who

acknowledged that the volume of study and assessment is undoubtedly challenging. There was general agreement that this degree of challenge was expected by students and actively managed by staff, for example through a variety in the range of assessment modes employed, published assessment schedules for all programmes, and through provision of academic skills workshops, academic guidance and formal feedback to students.

1.34 Students made clear that they feel well supported in understanding the assessment requirements, how to achieve well relative to the criteria used to judge their performance and are satisfied with the quality and quantity of constructive feedback provided by their tutors. This was also confirmed by the external examiner in her first report to the College, in which she describes the quality of feedback to students as '...consistently outstanding: tailored to the individual, detailed and scholarly, rigorous but very supportive', commenting also that this models good practice for those students intending to become rabbis or teachers.

1.35 The review team concludes that credit and qualifications are awarded where the achievement of relevant learning outcomes has been demonstrated through assessment. Therefore the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

**Expectation (A3.3): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that processes for the monitoring and review of programmes are implemented which explicitly address whether the UK threshold academic standards are achieved and whether the academic standards required by the individual degree-awarding body are being maintained.**

**Quality Code, Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards**

## Findings

1.36 The College complies with the programme monitoring and review processes of the University. The process is evidence based and requires the College to evaluate provision with the purpose of summarising key themes and actions for enhancements.

1.37 Academic Board has overall responsibility for academic quality and standards in the College. Jewish Education, Jewish Studies and Rabbinic Course Teams have delegated oversight and responsibility for all aspects of the programmes, and the vocational modules of the Rabbinic Programme. Academic Board delegates responsibility to the Academic Quality Assurance Team (AQAT) for scrutinising annual reports and for assessing, on a quinquennial basis, whether the current policies and procedures for the design, approval, monitoring and review of programmes are operating effectively and to suggest improvements as necessary.

1.38 The annual report is brought to AQAT for scrutiny and discussion. Following scrutiny and comment by the University the report is considered at the Course Team meeting. Attention is paid in particular to reports of good practice, curriculum enhancement, any weakness or issues raised by the external examiner, the University, faculty and students. An action plan to address outstanding issues is prepared for implementation by the Course Team Leaders. These documents and reports are used by the College to help maintain and improve standards and for the University to establish whether standards are being maintained and are comparable to the sector. These processes would enable the Expectation to be met.

1.39 The review team noted that the College had recently submitted its first annual report for the Jewish Studies programme to the University, following the validation in July 2015. Although the report reflects on developments during the academic year, and specifically module tutor reports, it acknowledges that there are limited themes and issues brought forward. The focus is primarily on themes identified through external examiner feedback and those arising from the validation. The review team was, however, able to see evidence of annual reports submitted by the College to its previous partner. These reports show evidence of open, transparent and critical reflection on provision, with the involvement of students through Course Committees and at exit interviews. Clearly some issues are ongoing year to year, for example the delay in receiving planning permission for development of the library, but these are monitored.

1.40 The Study Abroad component of the programme is validated for the first time as a coherent element of the Graduate Diploma Part 2. The first annual monitoring report does not include any reference to the assurance of academic quality and standards of this component of the programme. Since the report had only recently been submitted to the University, the review team was not able to confirm whether this omission had been noted and referred back to the Course Team.

1.41 The College's awards are validated by the University for a period of six years from September 2015. Vocational provision is not validated, other than two modules in the final

year of the MA in Applied Rabbinic Theology. The College's Academic Board has agreed and initiated a quinquennial review of vocational provision during 2016-17 under its internal review procedures. These procedures aim to critically appraise the programme, its success in practice and its future development, including the setting of concrete objectives for the future as part of an action plan. In meetings with the review team, staff confirmed that they are seeking to increase the way in which the academic and vocational courses align and support each other.

1.42 Operational responsibility for ensuring that good practice is disseminated across the College and that action plans derived from the process of monitoring and reviewing programmes are implemented through the Course Teams is with the Head of Academic Services. The review team was able to confirm that documentation relating to all new and existing programmes is maintained and readily available to staff and students and accessible to the general public.

1.43 The College demonstrated that processes for the monitoring and review of programmes are implemented which explicitly address whether academic standards are achieved and whether the academic standards required by the awarding body is being maintained. Therefore the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

**Expectation (A3.4): In order to be transparent and publicly accountable, degree-awarding bodies use external and independent expertise at key stages of setting and maintaining academic standards to advise on whether:**

- **UK threshold academic standards are set, delivered and achieved**
- **the academic standards of the degree-awarding body are appropriately set and maintained.**

**Quality Code, Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards**

**Findings**

1.44 The College complies with the University's requirements on the use of external and independent expertise at key stages of setting and maintaining academic standards. The College consulted formally with its external examiner on curriculum developments prior to revalidation of its programmes. The University appointed appropriately qualified external panel members to join the validation panels and each programme is assigned an appropriately qualified external examiner. Recruitment to the Certificate of Higher Education in Jewish Education and MA in Jewish Educational Leadership was suspended for 2015-16 while revalidation took place in January 2016. As such, there is no external examiner report for these programmes. There are appropriate Link Tutor arrangements both to monitor and assure quality and standards and to provide support to the College as a new collaborative partner.

1.45 Additionally, there is a significant volume of evidence of external input and expertise to the work of the College in the governance and committee structures, and the involvement of local stakeholders in curriculum development and provision of placement opportunities, mentoring and tutoring in congregational settings. As an institution whose primary aim is to educate rabbis and teachers to serve the Jewish community this might be anticipated, and the engagement of stakeholders is indeed extensive. The processes in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.46 The review team met a small group of placement providers who confirmed the extremely close formal and informal relationships they have with the College and its students. They reiterated that congregations are part of the reform and liberal movements that participate in the governance of the College. Feedback mechanisms through regular review meetings allow the congregational community to comment on the extent of students' knowledge in particular areas and thereby curriculum content overall. Likewise, the College informs placement providers and congregational stakeholders of any significant changes to programmes that may impact them. Placement providers commented that working with the College and its students is a very enriching experience in an ongoing relationship.

1.47 The review team confirmed that appropriate use is made of external expertise to advise on whether threshold academic standards are set, delivered and achieved and to confirm that the academic standards of the University's awards are appropriately set and maintained. Therefore the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

## The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies: Summary of findings

1.48 In reaching its judgement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

1.49 All of the Expectations for this judgement area are met and the associated levels of risk are low. In all sections under academic standards the College is also required to adhere to the procedures of its awarding body. There are no features of good practice, recommendations or affirmations in this section.

1.50 The review team concludes that the maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of the degree-awarding body at the College **meets** UK expectations.

## 2 Judgement: The quality of student learning opportunities

**Expectation (B1): Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective processes for the design, development and approval of programmes**

### **Quality Code, Chapter B1: Programme Design, Development and Approval**

#### **Findings**

2.1 The College is a unique provider in the UK and its rabbinic training is internationally recognised by the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Current and future development of programmes is driven by its mission statement to be 'the pre-eminent institution of Jewish scholarship and learning that is the heart of the intellectual and spiritual life of the Progressive Jewish community'. The vision and mission of the College is underpinned by a set of common values that inform and steer the design, development and delivery of its academic portfolio. This mission is further expressed in the College's Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Strategy and is reflected within the College's strategic priorities to develop two new programmes: a cantorial/sacred music programme and a doctoral programme. The College ensures that faculty is engaged in both research and publication to inform ongoing curriculum development and to maintain the currency of its practice.

2.2 Although the College has local regulations and a process for developing and approving a programme prior to formal partner validation these are under review following the change in awarding body. The College's local regulations are intended for use in tandem with its awarding body regulations when developing a programme for approval initially by the College's Academic Board. The regulations seek to ensure that programme design makes appropriate use of external higher education reference points such as the FHEQ, national credit framework and Subject Benchmark Statements. External academics, professionals, alumni, stakeholders and students are consulted and invited to contribute to the curriculum development team that designs and develops the programme for approval. The final documentation is prepared in line with the requirements of the collaborative partner. The College is currently in early-stage discussions with potential partners for the development of new programmes to meet the objectives of its strategic plan. The processes in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.3 The review team tested the Expectation by considering a range of documentation and holding meetings with staff and students.

2.4 The Haifa component of the Graduate Diploma programme originally emerged as a proposal in the January 2012 working paper following an exploratory visit to Israel and ran as part of the provision with the previous awarding body. Following validation by the University, it now features in the 2016-17 Prospectus as a 45 credit optional module. The Study Abroad module provides a shell within which there is some flexibility of choice for the student in Haifa to select two modules in addition to ongoing study of Hebrew, Rabbinic Literature, experiential and vocational elements. As such, the Study Abroad component is referred to as a 'programme' with its own handbook. This handbook does, however, make it explicit that the modules studied at Haifa will form part of the credits necessary to complete the Graduate Diploma successfully.

2.5 Details of the Study Abroad component and the module descriptor are included in the Hebrew and Jewish Studies Handbook and students and staff emphasised the

importance of this element of the programme for students intending to be ordained as rabbis. Development of this component as a module within the programme was required as a condition of validation and the learning outcomes of the Study Abroad module are not yet included in the mapping of modules against the programme learning outcomes of the Graduate Diploma in Hebrew and Jewish Studies, Part 2. As such, its integration and coherence with the award as a whole is not made explicit. Some other aspects of this component have also yet to be included in programme documentation. There is currently no reference to regulations for Study Abroad at Haifa in either the Jewish Studies Student Handbook or in the Israel Handbook. The College states that it has developed guidance and regulations on the Study Abroad programmes but these are at present drafts awaiting approval. According to the College's mapping against sector-wide expectations in this regard, the Study Abroad component is due to be reviewed by the summer of 2017.

2.6 On the basis of meetings held at the College and in a range of documents seen, it is clear to the review team that the College promotes a shared understanding of its approach to programme development among staff, students and other stakeholders. In reviewing its own procedures for programme design, development and approval the College is providing a focus for organisational improvement. The review team concludes that a strategic approach is taken to development priorities that are informed by the Board of Governors and discussed at Academic Board. Processes for programme design, development and approval are, overall, coherent and transparent. Therefore the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

**Expectation (B2): Recruitment, selection and admission policies and procedures adhere to the principles of fair admission. They are transparent, reliable, valid, inclusive and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes. They support higher education providers in the selection of students who are able to complete their programme.**

**Quality Code, *Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education***

**Findings**

2.7 The admission of students is undertaken by the College with the Memoranda of Cooperation. The University's general entry and language requirements are augmented by programme-specific requirements during validation. Details are then provided in each programme specification and in other relevant publications including the website. The College has established its own policies and procedures for the recruitment, selection and admission of students onto its programmes. The College commits itself to provide accurate information on selection and admissions processes, fees and bursaries so that prospective students can make informed application decisions.

2.8 The College's recruitment, selection and admissions regulations are approved by the University and provide information about the responsibilities and authority of committees and individuals engaged in recruitment and admissions.

2.9 The College runs an Admission Board for students wishing to study for the rabbinate and admission teams for students wishing to enrol on Jewish Studies or Jewish Education courses. There is no published right of appeal for admissions decisions made by the College. Recruitment targets for the rabbinic study route are set in consultation with the faith's Progressive movements and so take into consideration the needs of the Jewish Progressive community in the UK for rabbis and educators. This target also influences the number of bursaries on offer. Targets are also specified in the Memoranda of Cooperation with the University for each year of its operation. The Senior Management Team review recruitment, selection and admissions data alongside progression and completion data.

2.10 Candidates with specific learning difficulties (SpLD) or disabilities are prompted to disclose their particular needs in both the application form and acceptance letter. The College provides guidance on how to respond to disclosures in their Code of Practice Regarding Disabilities.

2.11 Applicants are required to inform the College if they wish to apply for AP(E)L and prompts appear in admissions printed and online information. The award of AP(E)L conforms with the University's requirements and is in accordance with the College's own regulations as approved by its awarding body. Requests are considered by the Collaborative Programme Accreditation Board chaired by the University's Link Tutor and outcomes are reported to the College's Examinations Board.

2.12 The admissions process as designed and documented meets the Expectation with the exception that applicants do not have a published right to appeal admissions decisions made by the College.

2.13 The review team tested the Expectation by reviewing the evidence base provided and documentation made available during the review on CollegeNet, the College's VLE. In addition the team met University and College staff, students, and vocational placement providers.

2.14 The College publishes clear and accessible information on its application processes, including information on AP(E)L applications and disclosure of disabilities, the College's policy for which embeds equal opportunities in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

2.15 Decisions regarding applications to individual Jewish Studies and Jewish Education programmes are usually made based on information provided in the application form, transcripts and a personal statement, although candidates may also be invited for interview. Training is provided for those staff involved in interviews and written guidance is provided to ensure that the College's commitment to equal opportunities is upheld.

2.16 Candidates for the rabbinic route require a reference from the Progressive movement to apply to the College. The admissions process then includes three days of interviews and experiential sessions, a process that has operated successfully at the College for many years. A feedback session is available for all candidates to enable them to reflect on the outcome of their application. In addition, letters are sent to all candidates confirming their acceptance or explaining why their application was not successful. The review team learned that occasionally a successful candidate could have their application deferred for different reasons, which range from a particular set of personal reasons to the need to fulfil entry requirements. Rabbinic students whom the team met were made well aware of the process of admissions prior to applying and were all positive about the three-day experience and its value in determining the likely success of candidates post-enrolment.

2.17 The review team was able to confirm that the College refuses to accept appeals from unsuccessful applicants to the College in accordance with the University's Admissions Policy.

2.18 The College keeps in regular contact with successful applicants, providing information about dates for blended learning sessions for Jewish Education students, along with timetables and the academic calendar for all students. Students were content with the volume and accuracy of information provided to them during the application process. An induction week helps students to make the transition into the College life and all students reported feeling well prepared for their study at the College.

2.19 The College's application processes are thorough and well documented. The process allows for feedback to both successful and unsuccessful students, and prepares those who go on to study at the College effectively. Consequently, the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low. The review team noted that the absence of a University appeal process for unsuccessful applicants was reflected in the College's processes and as such did not allow this omission to influence any conclusions regarding the meeting of the Expectation.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

**Expectation (B3): Higher education providers, working with their staff, students and other stakeholders, articulate and systematically review and enhance the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices, so that every student is enabled to develop as an independent learner, study their chosen subject(s) in depth and enhance their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking.**

### **Quality Code, *Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching***

#### **Findings**

2.20 The College has a mission to educate the next generation of Jewish leaders through its commitment to the delivery of Jewish Studies and Jewish Education. This College acknowledges that it has very few students and that it can hence offer students individualised solutions to help them to develop and flourish. This is reflected within the College's Mission statement, and further expressed in the College's Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Strategy and strategic priorities.

2.21 The Jewish Studies and Jewish Education degrees are designed to prepare students academically and vocationally for careers as educators or rabbis. The balance of studies for rabbinic students shifts from concentrating more on the academic side in the early degrees to a more vocational emphasis later on, particularly in the MA in Applied Rabbinic Theology. The Jewish Education awards are more academically focused and include a project in the Cert Ed or a dissertation in the MA. The aim in delivering these programmes is to embed a range of pedagogical approaches that include modern methods and traditional Jewish approaches in order to achieve the learning outcomes. Overall there is also an intention to make research-led teaching more explicit.

2.22 Applicants and students with SpLD are encouraged to declare this, which then enables the College to put support and adjustments in place on the basis of recommendations from specialist assessment.

2.23 The College employs academics and practitioners that include rabbi and educator alumni as its teaching staff. Some of the academics also hold positions at other higher education institutions. The student learning experience is therefore influenced by staff who draw on knowledge and experience-based academic scholarship and professional practice. The College has recently worked to strengthen the links between the peer observation, staff appraisal and staff development. To this end, a Staff Development and Appraisal Scheme and an academic promotion policy have been developed.

2.24 The College works to continually improve the feedback it gives to students, which has been reported as 'consistently outstanding' by the current external examiner. Support for teaching staff includes team teaching that enables peer support and advice on teaching and learning practice. Potential improvements that have been identified include the need to improve the amount of feedback given to students prior to the end of term.

2.25 The College has been implementing a Strategy for Electronic Communication. This has led to improvements in audio-visual equipment for classrooms, improved Wi-Fi, increased use of Adobe Connect for online learning, the ongoing development of CollegeNet, a new Koha library catalogue and a new website.

2.26 The College provides information to its students about learning opportunities and the support available to them during Induction Week. More detailed information is included in the student handbooks with sections on advice, guidance and support, as well as study support and learning resources. There are also handbooks on placements and the Study

Abroad programme. Information is also available on website pages or as electronic documents on the College's VLE, CollegeNet.

2.27 The College currently has no arrangement to enrol research degree students although some staff do co-supervise research degree students enrolled at other institutions.

2.28 The College's Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Strategy provides a basis for continued improvement in the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices and this, along with other initiatives such as developments in peer observation practice, enable the Expectation to be met.

2.29 The review team was given a demonstration of CollegeNet and Adobe Connect along with opportunities to ask questions during formal meetings with staff, students and vocational placement providers. The review team also reviewed evidence provided by the College.

2.30 The College pursues an explicit approach to combine academic and vocational elements in curriculum design and through the Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Strategy, with a consequent mix of modern and traditional approaches to learning. The strategy is further active in driving improvements in the students' learning experience. Two ongoing projects include the development of CollegeNet and the redevelopment of the Library and a new student lounge. The College's library holds unique collections and over 60,000 books but requires expansion due to lack of space for storage and study. At the time of the review the College is still awaiting planning permission. The review team was given a demonstration of CollegeNet. While it was being developed as a VLE its current capability is limited mainly as an archiving facility for electronic files, including a comprehensive set of staff and student information such as handbooks and definitive programme information, and external examiner reports.

2.31 College staff expressed the view that the pathway for rabbinic study constituted a professional training programme. In this context the importance of a combination of vocational training and academic learning was evident. However, the interrelationship between the vocational and academic elements is not immediately obvious from inspection of the programme level outcomes. The resulting journey through the degree programmes that comprise the rabbinic route becomes increasingly intense over the five-year (full-time) study period. When questioned, students acknowledged the high levels of support available to them during their study and the quality of feedback received, both in terms of tutor support and assessment feedback. Students also have various channels through which they can provide feedback. The most recent end-of-semester feedback forms demonstrated their appreciation of the quality of the assessment feedback. However, this was in contrast to comments on feedback received from their Rabbinic Tutors and Mentors, which is of less consistent quality.

2.32 The College continues to work to improve assessment feedback timing and although the students whom the review team met confirmed that they were content with the quality of feedback the Student Submission, which is produced as part of this review, had noted that assessment feedback could be slow in coming or late. It also observed that certain staff would benefit from formal teaching qualifications and/or training in teaching methods although the students met, who constituted the majority of those studying at the College, were very supportive of staff.

2.33 All staff engage in peer observation, and improvements driven by the new Staff Development and Appraisal Scheme include the allocation of a mentor for new staff. The use of Adobe Connect for online learning, which enables sessions to be recorded for students, is being promoted by the College and staff tutorials have been provided. It was

stated that Adobe Connect can provide a blended platform to assist in the delivery of the Jewish Education programmes.

2.34 The College is able to provide personalised support for its students. The Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Strategy is providing a focus for improvement in the student learning experience, although the review team concludes that CollegeNet lacked the utility of a VLE. Overall the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

**Expectation (B4): Higher education providers have in place, monitor and evaluate arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.**

**Quality Code, Chapter B4: Enabling Student Development and Achievement**

**Findings**

2.35 The College has a number of approaches to enable student development and achievement. These include: a policy on Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG); a personal tutorial system which incorporates a system for reviewing students and providing them with feedback; the Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Strategy; a Strategy for Electronic Communication; support for disabled students; and study support. The College considers the CEIAG to be central to the overall strategy.

2.36 The College has developed a tutorial system to support students by establishing a holistic view of their progress. The areas covered in the meetings include personal, academic, vocational, spiritual and interpersonal relationships and students are matched with either an academic or a rabbinic tutor when they are accepted onto a programme. Tutors report to Course Teams on their student's progress, achievement and difficulties at least once a year. The reports are agreed in advance and shared with teaching staff so that a rounded view of the student can emerge. The tutor then gives the student feedback from the meeting so that the student can gain a fresh perspective on their progress.

2.37 The vocational and placement programmes for rabbinic students help prepare for a future job after ordination. They are organised in collaboration with the College's stakeholders, who include the Progressive movements in whose synagogues the students are placed. The Head of Vocational Studies chairs the Placements Committee, which has representation from the Progressive movements. In addition to vocational study, further enrichment opportunities are provided for students during their studies. These include a yearly two-week seminar called KOL BO, funding to support students who wish to participate in Interfaith and other conferences, and the Israel study abroad programme, which is part of the Graduate Diploma in Hebrew and Jewish Studies, Part 2.

2.38 The College monitors the academic, vocational and placement programmes by collecting feedback from students, tutors, supervisors and placement providers. Information about the facilities, electronic communications, the tutorial system, disability support and study support are collected from students at end of term through feedback forms. There are additional opportunities for feedback from staff and students at Course Team meetings and at the Academic Board, and senior staff also meet members of the Student Society.

2.39 The College has established a range of approaches to enabling student development and achievement and has built in methods of feedback and reflection. These would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.40 The review team tested the Expectation by meeting with University and College staff, students and vocational placement providers, in addition to reviewing evidence provided by the College.

2.41 The library is a valuable scholarly resource and is recognised by SCONUL as a Library of National Significance. It is regularly used by scholars from other institutions. The expansion plans are pending planning approval.

2.42 The CEIAG provides clear statements on the College's approach to careers education, information and guidance in addition to the vocational nature of programmes and the opportunities for placements.

2.43 The review team learned that the vocational and placement programmes for rabbinic students provide an opportunity for them to get to know their future employers and the Vocational Placement Handbook places a great emphasis on the support of the congregation. Students are also asked to flag to tutors if their placement setting does not allow them to achieve all of the vocational learning outcomes. This and other issues concerning placements can be raised at the Placements Committee, at Course Team meetings, or directly with the Head of Vocational Studies who chairs the committee. A handbook provides guidance to rabbinic tutors, which includes the formal provision of feedback to determine the successful outcome of placements.

2.44 Students value the annual KOL BO event, which brings together a wide range of informative sessions that cover issues relevant to Progressive Jewish community.

2.45 All students have access to personal tutors and it is the joint responsibility of the tutor and student to arrange meetings a minimum of two to three times a year. Tutors and students are advised to include personal development planning as part of the meetings and it is up to the student to make use of this opportunity for reflection. This approach may in part provide the basis for student observations that the personal tutor system is patchy and sometimes driven solely by the student. However, feedback from the tutor does provide opportunities for the College to determine how best to help a student in their studies, with developmental support available from relevant experts if required.

2.46 Student progress is considered on an individual basis at Examination Boards. Progression and achievement rates are high and reasons for non-completion are not normally on academic grounds.

2.47 The College strives to enable student development and achievement through a range of methods. Students are also closely monitored during their studies and although the College is currently hampered in its efforts to expand the library and there are minor shortcomings in tutorial support, the Expectation is therefore met and the level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

**Expectation (B5): Higher education providers take deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience.**

**Quality Code, Chapter B5: Student Engagement**

**Findings**

2.48 The College believes that student involvement is an integral part of the learning opportunities it offers students and that it is part of their professional and personal development as future educators and rabbis. Furthermore, it welcomes the contributions students make to the culture and development of the College and in creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and constructive dialogue. All students automatically belong to the Students' Society, which engages actively with the College's senior management team, meeting at least twice each semester.

2.49 There is student representation on almost every committee at the College except for committees such as the Examinations Board, Placement Committee and Admissions Board, which deal with personal issues affecting students. At meetings of the Academic Board and the Course Teams a specific item is reserved on the agenda for the student representatives to speak and they are encouraged to participate actively in discussions. Reserved business is closed to students. The College also requests student participation in specific audits or as part of an external review process, and the College invites students to become involved in specific projects such as curriculum development or to provide input on the development of new regulations. With the hiatus in recruitment to the Education programme, securing representation on the blended learning programme has been challenging for the Education Course Team. The processes in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.50 The review team tested the Expectation by reading a range of documents including the student submission and met students and staff who confirmed that the formal arrangements work well.

2.51 Students are informed about opportunities for involvement in the work of the College at the point of induction. This is reinforced through information in handbooks that reiterate the value placed on student input and the practical benefit to students in working with lay leaders and other professional staff. Students are advised clearly on the need to consult their constituencies and to feed back on their discussions with staff and other professionals. Students receive minutes of the meetings they attend. Training is provided by previous representatives and there is a briefing from the Head of Academic Services. Students confirmed that these processes are effective.

2.52 Student opinion is also sought through end-of-semester feedback forms on modules and on the programme as a whole. In addition, tutors are asked to conduct a short oral feedback session mid-term so that issues can be addressed before the end of each module. Questionnaires are used following other workshops and seminars to evaluate students' learning experience. All students also participate in an exit interview at the end of their studies at the College. When combined these methods provide effective opportunities for students to give the College feedback and help to improve the programmes. Recent examples of student feedback that have been incorporated into the College's procedures and regulations include the Annual Rabbinic Student Review Process and the Student Code of Conduct.

2.53 In preparation for this review a comprehensive audit of student views was conducted in summer 2016, covering aspects of learning resources, services, information

and induction, range of learning opportunities, tutorial support, feedback from tutors and mentors and opportunities to share opinions. Overall there was very positive feedback with a very high response rate.

2.54 Students share the representative roles among themselves. In addition to the formal mechanisms for student engagement, the College benefits from the intimate environment arising from its size. Informal conversations between faculty and students pre-empt and prevent matters from becoming concerns. Students emphasised the collegial nature of the community in which they study, both in terms of the academic element and the vocational, congregational placements that they undertake. Students commented that they feel supported in their journey and their studies and that they can always ask questions, seek support or clarification and voice their opinions. Staff also confirmed that they are generally able to respond positively to matters raised by students, giving examples of altered deadlines for dissertation submission following discussion of options at the Course Team meeting. Staff stated that it is not always possible to schedule assignments in a way that is unproblematic for all parties but that when made aware of issues they are able to respond quickly. The College makes every effort to plan as carefully as possible in the context of a calendar of Jewish holidays that move each year.

2.55 The review team concludes that there is a range of measures and a cultural expectation that students will actively engage with each other and with the staff of the College. There are clear indications that these measures and the collegiality promoted are having a positive impact. Therefore the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

**Expectation (B6): Higher education providers operate equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment, including for the recognition of prior learning, which enable every student to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the credit or qualification being sought.**

**Quality Code, Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning**

**Findings**

2.56 The College has delegated responsibility for the assessment of students, invested in the Examinations Board. The Board is chaired by the University's Link Tutor and is attended by the relevant external examiner. The terms of reference and constitution of the Board are determined by the College's awarding body and arrangements for the assessment of learning outcomes are those schemes approved at validation. Programme specifications in student handbooks make clear the contribution of each module to the overall programme learning outcomes. Academic appeals remain the responsibility of the awarding body.

2.57 Assessment regulations are set out on the College's VLE CollegeNet, and in programme handbooks that also provide guidance on policies relating to procedures for submission of assessed work, examinations and on good academic practice. Students are provided with generic assessment criteria that give a clear indication of the academic level expected for each award as well as more specific criteria for assignments at module level. These were approved at the point of validation and are documented in the module specifications. Programme handbooks contain detailed information on failure of modules and the number of reassessments permitted and how they will be marked. Regulations on progression through an award and conferment of awards are made clear, as is the support available to students who are experiencing challenges or difficulties via the policy on concessions or extenuating circumstances, which is handled by the Examinations Officer. Student workload is also considered through the timing of assessments during the semester by mapping all assessments across the year. However, the design of assessments at the College does not consider needs of students with protected characteristics and instead relies on individual modifications. These arrangements are reviewed and commented on by the external examiner.

2.58 The College's regulations on AP(E)L follow the University's practice. The College has, however, chosen to limit the amount of credit it is prepared to approve to one third of the credits necessary to complete that award. Information for students regarding AP(E)L appears on the website, in the Prospectus and in the application form. Students are also reminded in the letters of acceptance sent to them and during the Induction Week that they can request AP(E)L, the deadline for which is two weeks into the term. Requests are considered by the Collaborative Programme Accreditation Board and require the assent of the external examiner. Decisions are reported to the Examinations Board, which is chaired by the University's Link Tutor. The processes in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.59 Meetings with staff and students confirmed that the programmes are very challenging and demanding in terms of intensity of study and volume of assessment. Comments from students in minutes and in the student submission also corroborated this view. Senior staff confirmed that the validation by a new awarding body had afforded an opportunity to review the range of assessment modes, introducing a greater variety for students. There had been a concerted effort in last few years to develop assessment modes relevant to professional practice and a greater emphasis on development of research skills and independent learning. Examples of specific module changes were provided that were echoed by students in their submission.

2.60 The review team met students from all five years of the programmes and they reiterated the changes that had been implemented from one year to the next. There is use of formative quizzes and short tests, and peer review supports reflection on learning. Students were able to speak confidently about both formative and summative assessments, where they would look for information on assignments and the criteria against which their work would be judged. Regular and easy access to tutors provides students with further confidence in knowing what is expected. Although most of the students at the College are mature and have undergraduate or master's degrees, workshops on good academic practice and academic writing are offered to students. Students were keen to impress on the review team that they expected a heavy work load and a challenging period of study, commenting that in addition to their academic studies they undertake vocational placements. For students training to become rabbis, this experience is preparation for a demanding role in the community.

2.61 The College does not use anonymous marking because students' work is easily identifiable and the nature of the provision inclines markers to direct their feedback to the specific student. Every assignment is double marked and differences between the roles and responsibilities of the first and second marker are detailed in the regulations, as is the process of agreeing marks. Oral pieces of work are always recorded in addition to being second marked so that the external examiner can hear the recording if required.

2.62 Students and the external examiner comment favourably on the quality and quantity of in-depth constructive feedback on assessed work. Examinations Board minutes provide evidence of very positive comments from the external examiner on full double marking and an opportunity for the external to see all scripts. Where an issue had arisen regarding inconsistency in the application of assessment criteria, this was reported to Academic Board for action to be determined and staff to be advised accordingly.

2.63 The College regularly reviews its assessment practice, driven by the recommendations of the external examiners, feedback from collaborative partner staff, and consequent to mapping practice against the Quality Code. The review team concludes that the College operates equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment that enable every student to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the award. Therefore the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

## **Expectation (B7): Higher education providers make scrupulous use of external examiners.**

### **Quality Code, Chapter B7: External Examining**

#### **Findings**

2.64 The University is responsible for the appointment of external examiners, and the College draws on the expertise of faculty in putting forward suggestions for new external examiners. Proposals are considered by the Principal, the Dean, the Director of Jewish Education and the Head of Academic Services. Nominations are reported to Academic Board and Course Teams and the College's recommendation, in line with the University's guidance on appointment, is conveyed to the University for approval. It appoints an external examiner to each of the two cognate areas, Jewish Studies and Jewish Education. Students are advised of external examiner appointments and their role in their handbooks and have sight of the annual reports. Student representatives on the Course Team receive a copy as a member of the committee and are present when the report is discussed.

2.65 Induction for external examiners is offered by both the University and the College. External examiners are provided with appropriate materials including handbooks, course specifications, regulations, assessment schedules, samples of course work, marking schemes, assessment criteria and dates of the Examination Boards. External examiners visit the College to meet academic staff. The briefing includes information about the College in general, its history and ethos and specific information regarding the College's assessment regulations and practice.

2.66 A single Examinations Board is responsible for receiving student marks and for determining the academic standing of students, their progression, classification and conferment. These decisions are endorsed at the Board by the external examiner together with the chair of the Board and the University's Link Tutor. The processes in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.67 In testing the Expectation the review team considered a wide range of documentation and met staff and students.

2.68 The scope and responsibilities of the external examiner are determined by the University and align with QAA guidance. They comment and prepare recommendations on whether threshold academic standards are maintained, the assessment process measures student achievement in a rigorous and fair way against learning outcomes and is conducted in line with the College's regulations and policies, and the academic standards and achievements of students are comparable to those of other UK degree-awarding bodies. This is confirmed at the Examinations Board and in the annual report sent to the awarding body and to the College Principal.

2.69 The review team considered the external examiners' annual reports and the College's responses. In her first report, the current external examiner confirms the supportive induction process and range of information received. The report also provides evidence of consultation with the external examiner on changes to modules for 2016-17 with provision of a clear rationale. Identification of good practice in the report regarding the diversity of assessments for different kinds of topics confirms the positive response of the College to matters raised by students. The report reiterates the challenging nature of the programmes and confirms that students are well supported to manage this through detailed, scholarly and rigorous feedback. The report, and recommendations on enhancement, are taken by the Dean to Academic Board and discussed with faculty at the Academic Assembly at the start of the academic year. In its self-evaluation document, submitted as part of this

review, and in meetings with staff, the College was able to identify enhancements that had emerged from feedback in previous external examiner reports.

2.70 The responsibilities of the external examiner for Jewish Studies do not include the module Study Abroad. There was no equivalent report from the University of Haifa available to the review team.

2.71 Fundamental to the role of an external examiner is the capacity to provide feedback on whether assessment instruments and criteria are appropriate as measures of specific learning outcomes at module level. The University's regulations require examinations to be reviewed by external examiners prior to their use. Meetings with staff confirmed that this does not currently happen at the College. The review team **recommends** that the College ensures that external examiners receive draft examination papers in advance in line with the University's regulations. Overall, the arrangements in place at the College confirm that appropriate and extensive use is made of external examiners. Therefore the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

**Expectation (B8): Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective, regular and systematic processes for monitoring and for review of programmes.**

### **Quality Code, Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review**

#### **Findings**

2.72 The College's own procedures for programme design, approval, monitoring and review were not approved by the awarding body at the point of validation and are under review this year. As such, the College operates under the University's Annual Monitoring and Enhancement (AME) policy. The process considers whether programme outcomes are satisfactory, and whether programmes are effective in achieving stated aims and intended learning outcomes. It identifies issues associated with the achievement of programme standards and the quality of the student experience. Enhancement is achieved by ensuring that appropriate actions are taken to resolve issues, to improve standards and develop the student experience.

2.73 Collaborative partners running validated provision complete an annual monitoring report (AMR) for each programme or cluster of programmes as agreed, authored by the Institution Link Tutor. The University provides guidance and support for authors of AMRs to inform writing style and report structure, evidence to be considered and includes prompts for all aspects of provision on which evaluative reflection is expected. Exemplars and templates further support the process. Reports are due for submission in late November each year. The AMR is considered by the University Link Tutor and relevant Deputy Dean who evaluate the effectiveness of the provision and identify any risks in terms of academic standards and/or the quality of education provided to students. Feedback to the collaborative partner is provided by the relevant University Link tutor. AMRs should be considered at the programme Boards of Study with comments minuted for action and at committees of the partner institution concerned with academic quality and standards.

2.74 The College has recently submitted its AMR to the University and the review team was not able to reflect on the University's feedback or the College's response to the University's consideration of the report. The College's AMR drew on a wide evidence base which includes external examiner reports, admissions data, student feedback mechanisms and validation and review reports. The processes in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.75 In testing the Expectation the review team considered a range of documentation and met staff who visit the University of Haifa and students who had undertaken a semester in Israel.

2.76 The AMR focused on a review of the Jewish Studies programme 2015-16 since the revalidated Jewish Education programme recruited for the first time in September 2016. The review team spoke with students and staff about their contribution to annual monitoring and also read previous Annual Programme Evaluations submitted to the former partner over a number of years. It found clear evidence of reflective, critical analysis in the consideration of the evidence on which the annual reports are constructed. There is also evidence of changes and improvements year on year in response to matters raised by staff and students. In its self-evaluation, the College notes that the process of annual monitoring feeds into the College's long term strategies included in documents such as the Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Strategy and the Strategy on Electronic Communication, and some of these themes could be followed through successive reports. Module change forms are completed where modifications require the approval of the University. Following

consultation with the external examiner, this was the case for changes to the title, aims and content of a module ahead of the 2016-17 academic year. The AMR is approved by Academic Board and the College acknowledges that, as a new process, the University's action plan template is not as developed as it will be in the future.

2.77 The AMR is intended to include all validated provision that falls within the auspices of the Memorandum of Cooperation. However, the only reference to the new validated module at Haifa is included in the annual monitoring report of 2015-16. In the supporting documentation to the annual monitoring report, no mention of a review of grades for the Study Abroad module is made in either set of Examination Board minutes and there is very limited mention in the Jewish Studies Board of Studies minutes for 2015-16 provided to the review team. Likewise, little mention is made at Academic Board meetings in 2015-16.

2.78 While some assurance is provided by the employment of the Director of Israel Programming there is no formal review of the Study Abroad element and therefore the review team **recommends** that the formal annual review of the Haifa component is included in the annual monitoring report of the programme as a whole. The review process includes informal conversations with students, guided written student reports and a summary report on individual students to the College from the Director of Israel Programming. Students' written and oral reflections on their experience are balanced, insightful and constructive but they do not constitute a process of annual monitoring and review and are not currently considered within the College's deliberative structures. The review team was advised that these reports on individual students will now be considered by the Course Team and by Academic Board.

2.79 The review team is aware that the College has undergone significant upheaval over the last two academic years and, despite this, has maintained academic standards and a quality learning experience for its students. Between validation events the College also received an annual monitoring visit by QAA in December 2015. The report of the monitoring visit acknowledges that the demands associated with validation have been time consuming for a small core team. The Haifa component is validated and contributes to the award of Graduate Diploma in Hebrew and Jewish Studies, Part 2. The time students spend at Haifa is considered significant in their development towards becoming a rabbi. Full inclusion of this component of provision in the process of annual monitoring and review will ensure that the design of this component continues to provide an appropriate level of academic challenge, that the learning opportunities in Haifa enable students to meet the programme learning outcomes for the Graduate Diploma in Hebrew and Jewish Studies, Part 2 and that enhancements to the Study Abroad modules can be taken forward as part of the programme in a holistic way. There is evidence that the College is fully aware of its responsibilities for assuring quality and the review team is confident that this area will be addressed.

2.80 Vocational modules are taught by practitioners in the field with relevant and up-to-date practical information and learning. Feedback on placements takes the form of student reflection and placement provider summary reports. Placement experience contributes to the assessment of two modules, JS7406 and JS7407 for students on the rabbinic track. The vocational programmes are reviewed on a quinquennial basis and the College has initiated this process with a clear statement of purpose, and a review team with the appropriate composition to reflect the various stakeholders in the process.

2.81 The review team concludes that the College operates effective, regular and systematic processes for monitoring and for review of programmes. Therefore the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

**Expectation (B9): Higher education providers have procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints about the quality of learning opportunities; these procedures are fair, accessible and timely, and enable enhancement.**

**Quality Code, Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints**

**Findings**

2.82 For validated programmes, a student wishing to appeal a decision of the Examinations Board does so directly to the University. Information about the policy and procedures for academic appeals is provided to students in their handbooks and links are provided to the relevant pages of the University's website. Here students find clear details of what constitutes an appeal, the grounds for making an appeal and how appeals can be resolved formally.

2.83 The College appeals procedures apply to students registered on non-validated programmes only, for example ordination and vocational programmes. Students are provided with details of these regulations and procedures on the VLE, CollegeNet.

2.84 Students who have a complaint or grievance about the provision of a programme or a service are advised to follow the Complaints Procedure. The Complaints Procedure is accessible on CollegeNet to all members of staff and the student body. The procedures clearly allow for students to make a complaint either individually or as a collective body. Anonymous complaints or those made by a third party are not considered and the criteria for making a complaint are clearly stated in the procedures. The aim is to resolve the complaint within 20 working days to the satisfaction of both parties. The processes in place allow the Expectation to be met.

2.85 The review team met staff and students and discussed the procedures for appeals and complaints with them. The team was advised that although the College has a formal Appeals and Complaints Board there has not been an academic appeal or student complaint in its 60 year history. Students confirmed that they are aware of the formal processes but usually manage matters through informal processes. Students are encouraged to be reflective, give their opinions and raise any difficulties as they occur. The student representatives have a clear role in this and a member of faculty is appointed to each year group to provide support and deal with any matters raised.

2.86 Students reiterated that the size of the College, the profile of students and the nature of the educational programmes on which they are enrolled lend themselves to successful informal resolution of matters. Students were clear about where they would seek advice on how to make a complaint or submit an appeal should it be necessary and were content with the approach of dealing directly with faculty. The review team concludes that lack of any cases of appeals or complaints suggests that the lines of communication between the staff and students are open and transparent. Therefore the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

**Expectation (B10): Degree-awarding bodies take ultimate responsibility for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities, irrespective of where these are delivered or who provides them. Arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with organisations other than the degree-awarding body are implemented securely and managed effectively.**

**Quality Code, Chapter B10: Managing Higher Education Provision with Others**

**Findings**

2.87 The vocational placement programme offers training to students studying for ordination. The placements programme runs over five years but does not substantially integrate with the academic programmes taught at the College. The exception is as part of assessment in two of the modules on the MA in Applied Rabbinic Theology where students are required to draw upon the experience they gained in the placement programme.

2.88 The Study Abroad semester is part of the Graduate Diploma in Hebrew and Jewish Studies, Part 2. All rabbinic students are encouraged to spend their second semester at the University of Haifa to participate in an experiential non-assessed programme managed by the College's Director of the Israel programme. The College runs a parallel semester at the College with alternative study modules for students who do not participate in the option to study abroad. The Study Abroad semester was approved as part of the University's validation of the Jewish Studies programmes. Details of the Study Abroad semester are made available to students in the Handbook for the Graduate Diploma in Hebrew and Jewish Studies, Part 2 along with a Study Abroad Israel Handbook. Students receive transcripts from the University of Haifa and there is a process to transfer these grades for approval at the College's Examinations Board using a University approved conversion scale. The College monitors the placements by collecting feedback from students, the Directors of the Programmes, tutors and supervisors. These are reported annually to the Academic Board.

2.89 The Placement Handbook provided to students and placement providers lists the responsibilities of all three parties: the student, provider and College. The Study Abroad Handbook details students' responsibilities as well as their entitlement to services at, and the relationship with, the University of Haifa. Any student appeals are sent directly to University of Haifa's International School while student complaints would be submitted to the College and follow the College's Complaints Procedures.

2.90 The College has established a comprehensive set of supporting documentation that provides information for staff and students involved in vocational placement provision and the Study Abroad semester. The Study Abroad programme forms part of the Graduate Diploma in Hebrew and Jewish Studies, Part 2, although documentation supporting its integration into that programme was not available at the time of the review. The design of the Study Abroad semester would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.91 The review team tested the expectation by reviewing evidence made available by the College. Meetings were also held with staff, students and vocational placement providers.

2.92 The vocational placement programme forms an integral part of rabbinic student training for ordination. It is well supported by the Progressive movements and there is some flexibility in the scheduling of placement sessions during the academic year to enable a balance between the vocational commitments and academic study. Handbooks are available for placement tutors and students which clearly define the expectations and the purpose of placements. As the placements are not integral to the academic programmes student

workload during placement periods can be demanding. The review team met vocational placement tutors, all of whom had significant knowledge of the College and its programmes, and the purpose of the placements. There was also a clear understanding of the expectations that the College has of its placement providers and mentors. The relationships between the College and the providers are strong due to long-standing and close working relationships and the wider Progressive Jewish community network. It was accepted that placement visits from College staff were sporadic and not a formalised aspect of the placement experience. It was explained that timetabling visit activity would place significant extra demands upon College staff but the providers did believe that such visits would offer potential benefits for the student.

2.93 The Study Abroad programme operates effectively as a placement visit. There is effective documentation in place to support a programme of study for the individual student and the Programme Director liaises with students in the UK prior to their departure to provide initial induction. Students are also supported effectively by the University of Haifa while engaged in the placement and those who had taken the opportunity were clearly able to express its value as part of the route towards ordination. However, the method by which the Study Abroad semester embeds into the Graduate Diploma, and how individual student programmes contribute to achievement of the programme learning outcomes, is less clear. The handbook explains that the modules taken at the University of Haifa will be assessed and that the student must return with a transcript of the results to enable conversion of these into compatible marks for the University's grading system at Examinations Board. However, there is no external examiner oversight of module standards and the system of ensuring credit equivalency is opaque. The College states that it has developed guidance and regulations on placements and the Study Abroad programmes but they are in draft form awaiting approval.

2.94 As the Study Abroad semester is integral to the programme then it should be expected to feature in the AMR. However, the Haifa component is only included in the annual monitoring report of 2015-16 through mention of the new module that was not validated as part of the original scheme. The module therefore does not feature in the Annual Programme Evaluation of 2014-15 and there is no mention of the Study Abroad component. It is hence recommended in section B8 that the College ensures that the formal annual review of the Haifa component is included in the annual monitoring report of the programme as a whole.

2.95 The College has a long history of providing successful vocational placements and training for its students. The documentation and systems in place to support participation in placement work and study abroad is fit for purpose for both staff and students. The issue of embedding the Haifa component fully into programme annual monitoring and related processes remains extant (the recommendation in B8 refers to this) but is not one that places the Expectation at risk. Consequently, the Expectation is met and the risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

**Expectation (B11): Research degrees are awarded in a research environment that provides secure academic standards for doing research and learning about research approaches, methods, procedures and protocols. This environment offers students quality of opportunities and the support they need to achieve successful academic, personal and professional outcomes from their research degrees.**

**Quality Code, *Chapter B11: Research Degrees***

**Findings**

2.96 The College does not offer research degrees so this Expectation does not apply.

## The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.97 In reaching its judgement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

2.98 All of the Expectations relating to the College's quality of student learning opportunities are met, with low risk. The review team makes two recommendations in this section that concern ensuring that the formal annual review of the Haifa component is included in the annual monitoring report of the programme as a whole and ensuring that external examiners receive draft examination papers in advance, in line with awarding body regulations. There are no features of good practice or affirmations.

2.99 The review team concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities at the College **meets** UK expectations.

### **3 Judgement: The quality of the information about learning opportunities**

**Expectation (C): UK higher education providers produce information for their intended audiences about the higher education they offer that is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.**

#### **Quality Code, Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision**

##### **Findings**

3.1 The College's publicity, marketing and publications policy is a responsibility of the Publicity, Marketing and Publications Committee of the Board of Governors. The Committee is responsible for overseeing the quality, accuracy and consistency of published information including recruitment materials, handbooks, flyers and web pages. Relevant Directors of Department or Heads, as defined in the Publicity, Marketing and Publications Policy, are responsible for the production of accurate and up-to-date publicity information on academic programmes. The Head of Academic Services is also involved in assuring the accuracy of this information, providing a further level of control.

3.2 The main source of public information about the College is its website. It provides a wide range of college and programme-specific information including the College's Trustees Report and its Annual Review of College-related activities.

3.3 The College produces a range of detailed handbooks including student handbooks, placement handbooks, placement tutor handbooks and a rabbinic dissertation handbook. While these are available electronically, hard copies are made available to students upon request. The College consistently uses the University's templates for programme specifications and associated documentation, and provides module information in the handbooks along with a comprehensive set of guidance for students. Staff also have a Faculty Handbook which is kept up to date and contains a thorough information set in support of teaching and working at the College. Detailed records of students' results and classifications are kept on a secure part of the College's IT network and these conferment lists are verified by the University. It then produces the actual certificates. In addition, the College provides verified details of student performance to enable the University to produce the Diploma Supplement.

3.4 The website has a portal to CollegeNet. It is referred to as the College's VLE and is a data-sharing website where College regulations and codes of practice, definitive programme documentation, external examiner reports and other information of use to staff and students are kept.

3.5 The College produces an up-to-date, accurate and comprehensive set of documentation for staff, students and stakeholders, which allows the Expectation to be met.

3.6 The team reviewed the College's website and was given a presentation on CollegeNet. Evidence provided by the College was also reviewed and the team was able to meet staff and students of the College and staff who supported vocational placement.

3.7 The College's system of overseeing information published online or in hard copy is effective and ensures that information produced is accurate and fit for purpose. This system includes a Checklist for Compliance with the College's Publications Policy, which details specific sign-off of information for all aspects of published information, both internal and external.

3.8 Information on the website is clear and easily navigable. Much work and investment has been put into CollegeNet, although its use still remains largely as a document repository rather than a function-rich VLE. However, students considered CollegeNet fit for purpose as they believed that the size of the College did not necessarily warrant complex VLE software, given that support is readily available on aspects of study from College staff and course materials. Adobe Connect was being used to aid blended learning for Jewish Education students, some of whom studied away from the College for significant periods of time. Students were also very appreciative of the information with which they were provided by the College to support their studies and had full access to external examiner reports via CollegeNet.

3.9 The review team concludes that the College provides accurate and up-to-date information on all key aspects of its activities for staff, students and stakeholders, both for internal and external use. Therefore the Expectation is met and the risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

## The quality of the information about learning opportunities: Summary of findings

3.10 In reaching its judgement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

3.11 The Expectation for this judgement area is met and the associated level of risk is low. There are no features of good practice, recommendations or affirmations in this section.

3.12 The review team concludes that the quality of the information about learning opportunities at the College **meets** UK expectations.

## 4 Judgement: The enhancement of student learning opportunities

**Expectation (Enhancement): Deliberate steps are being taken at provider level to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities.**

### Findings

4.1 The development of a Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy 2016-20 emerges from the College's Strategic Plan and provides steer for subsidiary projects, some of which, such as IT and library services, are infrastructure projects. There are key objectives for the strategy: improving the active management and monitoring of teaching and learning, being at the forefront of innovative pedagogy in the training of rabbis and educators, and developing and supporting research-led teaching. The strategy itself articulates the sources of evidence and feedback from which actions and priorities have been determined, and these resonate with discussions between the review team, staff, placement providers and students.

4.2 While there is a strong commitment to ongoing improvement the College recognises the constraints that it has due to its size and resources. It prioritises, therefore, deliberate steps to improve the overall learning and teaching experience of students through its ability to address individual student needs and to support their achievement at a very personal level. The strategies and processes in place allow the Expectation to be met.

4.3 The review team saw evidence of outcomes from the deliberate steps taken to enhance the range of assessment instruments used across the five years of the programme, and assessment practice in general, including quality of feedback to students on their work. Likewise, enhanced ways of working collaboratively established in development projects have been retained in steady state delivery mode, for example the team teaching of the Rabbinic Literature and Jewish Education team, transforming into a teaching enhancement support group. Staff talked of seminars on learning and teaching, peer observation and the constructive and collegial engagement of students in their education.

4.4 More recently, the College has been able to take forward plans to enhance IT provision and the service provision of its library with extended Wi-Fi, a new library catalogue, new audio-visual resources in classrooms and the use of Adobe Connect to support blended learning.

4.5 The College provides a specialised vocational training programme to enable rabbinic students to explore core subject areas and to immerse themselves in them in both a practical and a reflective manner. Apprenticeships, internships and placements combine practical and pastoral skill sets with a view to supporting the transformation of students into religious professionals. Vocational placements are undertaken within the congregational communities of the reform movements in a mutually beneficial exchange, enabling students to practise and develop their pastoral and leadership skills, receiving the support of professional mentors and contributing actively to their religious community. Vocational modules are largely unassessed, other than vocational modules JS7406 Transition to the Rabbinate and JS7407 Leadership and Management Skills in the fifth year, which form part of the MA in Applied Rabbinic Theology.

All College-approved training is arranged under the auspices of the College's Placement Committee, which includes as members senior executives of the Movement for Reform Judaism and Liberal Judaism. The committee meets regularly to coordinate placements and receive feedback reports from congregations. In 2016-17 the College plans to undertake a quinquennial review of vocational training to evaluate the effectiveness of the current

programme, the ongoing relevance and currency of core content, practices and professional objectives, promote coherent integration between the vocational and academic aspects of study and ensure the full engagement of stakeholders in the process. The review team **affirms** the work being undertaken in the quinquennial review to increase the synergy between the academic and vocational action elements of the programme. Although not validated by the University, the vocational programme forms an important element of the five-year programme leading to ordination. Review of vocational provision currently takes place at the level of the individual student. The review team considered the range of evidence available and spoke with staff and students about rationale for, and progress towards, the quinquennial review. It is clear that the review will also clarify the processes for future monitoring of provision. The constitution of the review team includes faculty, student representatives, representation from the congregational movements and other national and international specialists. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

## The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

4.6 In reaching its judgement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

4.7 The Expectation in this area is met and the associated level of risk is low. There is one affirmation relating to the work being undertaken in the quinquennial review to increase the synergy between the academic and vocational elements of the programme.

4.8 The review team concludes that the enhancement of student learning opportunities at the College **meets** UK expectations.

## Glossary

This glossary is a quick-reference guide to terms in this report that may be unfamiliar to some readers. Definitions of key operational terms are also given on pages 21-24 of the [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\) handbook](#).

If you require formal definitions of other terms please refer to the section on assuring standards and quality: [www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality).

User-friendly explanations of a wide range of terms can be found in the longer **Glossary** on the QAA website: [www.qaa.ac.uk/Pages/GlossaryEN.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Pages/GlossaryEN.aspx).

### Academic standards

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

### Award

A qualification, or academic credit, conferred in formal recognition that a student has achieved the intended **learning outcomes** and passed the assessments required to meet the academic standards set for a **programme** or unit of study.

### Awarding organisation

An organisation authorised to award a particular qualification; an organisation recognised by Ofqual to award Ofqual-regulated qualifications.

### Blended learning

Learning delivered by a number of different methods, usually including face-to-face and e-learning (see **technology enhanced or enabled learning**).

### 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.

### Degree-awarding body

A UK higher education provider (typically a university) with the power to award degrees, conferred by Royal Charter, or under Section 76 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, or under Section 48 of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992, or by Papal Bull, or, since 1999, granted by the Privy Council on advice from QAA (in response to applications for taught degree awarding powers, research degree awarding powers or university title).

### Distance learning

A course of study that does not involve face-to-face contact between students and tutors but instead uses technology such as the internet, intranets, broadcast media, CD-ROM and video, or traditional methods of correspondence - learning 'at a distance'.

See also **blended learning**.

### Dual award or double award

The granting of separate awards (and certificates) for the same **programme** by two **degree-awarding bodies** who have jointly delivered the programme of study leading to them. See also **multiple award**.

### e-learning

See technology enhanced or enabled learning.

### **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 our review processes.

### **Expectations**

Statements in the **Quality Code** that set out what all UK higher education providers expect of themselves and each other, and what the general public can therefore expect of them.

### **Flexible and distributed learning**

A programme or module that does not require the student to attend classes or events at particular times and locations.

See also **distance learning**.

### **Framework**

A published formal structure. See also **framework for higher education qualifications**.

### **Framework for higher education qualifications**

A published formal structure that identifies a hierarchy of national qualification levels and describes the general achievement expected of holders of the main qualification types at each level, thus assisting higher education providers in maintaining academic standards. QAA publishes the following frameworks: *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and *The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland* (FQHEIS).

### **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 audit and 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 outcomes**

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

### **Multiple awards**

An arrangement where three or more **degree-awarding bodies** together provide a single jointly delivered **programme** (or programmes) leading to a separate **award** (and separate certification) of each awarding body. The arrangement is the same as for **dual/double awards**, but with three or more awarding bodies being involved.

### **Operational definition**

A formal definition of a term, establishing exactly what QAA means when using it in reviews and reports.

### **Programme (of study)**

An approved course of study that provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads to a qualification.

**Programme specifications**

Published statements about the intended **learning outcomes** of programmes of study, containing information about teaching and learning methods, support and assessment methods, and how individual units relate to levels of achievement.

**Quality Code**

Short term for the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which is the UK-wide set of **reference points** for higher education providers (agreed through consultation with the higher education community, and published by QAA), which states the **Expectations** that all providers are required to meet.

**Reference points**

Statements and other publications that establish criteria against which performance can be measured.

**Self-evaluation document**

A report submitted by a higher education provider, assessing its own performance, to be used as evidence in a QAA review.

**Subject Benchmark Statement**

A published statement that sets out what knowledge, understanding, abilities and skills are expected of those graduating in each of the main subject areas (mostly applying to bachelor's degrees), and explains what gives that particular discipline its coherence and identity.

**Technology enhanced or enabled learning (or e-learning)**

Learning that is delivered or supported through the use of technology.

**Threshold academic standard**

The minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for an academic **award**. Threshold academic standards are set out in the national **frameworks** and **Subject Benchmark Statements**.

**Virtual learning environment (VLE)**

An intranet or password-only interactive website (also referred to as a platform or user interface) giving access to **learning opportunities** electronically. These might include such resources as course handbooks, information and reading lists; blogs, message boards and forums; recorded lectures; and/or facilities for online seminars (webinars).

**Widening participation**

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

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