



Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) of London International Film School Ltd t/a London Film School

October 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 London International Film School Ltd t/a London Film School. The review took place from 4 to 6 October 2016 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Mr Mark Langley
- Dr Nicholas Papé
- Ms Emma Palmer (student reviewer).

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provided by London International Film School Ltd t/a London Film School 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)¹ 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 setting and 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 4.

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

¹ The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at: www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code.

² QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us.

³ Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers): www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/Educational-Oversight.aspx.

Key findings

QAA's judgements about London International Film School Ltd t/a London Film School

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at London International Film School Ltd t/a London Film School.

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

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following features of **good practice** at London International Film School Ltd t/a London Film School:

- the embedding of industry practice and standards throughout the School's provision, which enhances the students' learning experience (Expectations B3, A3.2, B1, B6 and Enhancement)
- the development of a fully interactive virtual learning environment to enable comprehensive support for student learning (Expectations B3 and C)
- the proactive and creative engagement with students to engender a strong sense of community that enables the development of their academic, personal and professional potential (Expectation B4)
- the depth and industry-relevance of assessment feedback to advance student development (Expectation B6).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations** to London International Film School Ltd t/a London Film School.

By March 2017:

- consolidate its strategic approach to the enhancement of student learning opportunities (Enhancement).

Affirmation of action being taken

The QAA review team **affirms** the following actions that London International Film School Ltd t/a London Film School is already taking to make academic standards secure and/or improve the educational provision offered to its students:

- the work being undertaken to embed and strengthen formal feedback to students (Expectation B5).

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

Financial sustainability, management and governance

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

About London International Film School Ltd t/a London Film School

London International Film School Ltd t/a London Film School (the School) is based in Covent Garden in the centre of London and offers postgraduate provision predominantly in filmmaking and screenwriting. The School's mission is to foster creativity, collaboration and innovation, but with heart and integrity. The School states its values as being respect, integrity, collaboration, innovation, heritage and creativity.

The School has been operating for more than 60 years and has an international reputation. In September 2017 it will move from its current site to a new purpose-built site in London City Island.

The School offers the following programmes: MA Filmmaking (two years); MA Screenwriting (one year); MA International Film Business (one year); and a research PhD in Film by Practice. The Filmmaking and Screenwriting master's courses were previously validated by London Metropolitan University and are now validated by the University of Warwick. The MA International Film Business and PhD Film by Practice are joint provision with the University of Exeter.

The School has 218 students, all of whom are full time and postgraduate. The majority of students are on the two-year MA Filmmaking course. There are 31 full-time and 11 part-time staff.

The School has had a new Director and Chief Executive Officer since August 2014, and there have been a number of changes to staffing and governance structures, including the establishment of an Academic Registry bringing together previously separate areas of student services, admissions, scheduling and bursary/grant administration. A new strategic plan has been developed, which includes the setting of goals and objectives, and the formal identification of a set of School values. This work now frames much of the ongoing change, from structural and governance changes, through the curriculum review and committees review. It links the day-to-day activities within the School with the broader Strategic Plan, and School staff and students with the Leadership Group, the Academic Board and the Board of Governors.

Key challenges faced by the School are managing the impending move to new premises and a full curriculum review planned for the coming year.

The School received a commendable outcome from its 2015 QAA Review for Educational Oversight monitoring visit and has addressed all actions arising from its previous Review for Educational Oversight in 2012. These include: the design and implementation of a new committee structure; reviewing processes for ensuring the accuracy of student achievement data; and developing a formal organisational staff development strategy.

Explanation of the findings about London International Film School Ltd t/a London Film School

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 (FHEQ)* 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 School's degree-awarding bodies - the University of Exeter (UoE), London Metropolitan University (LMU) (ending) and the University of Warwick (UoW) - are ultimately responsible for setting threshold academic standards and ensuring that qualifications take appropriate account of external reference points, such as the Quality Code, good practice guidance from the Higher Education Academy, QAA Knowledgebases, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) good practice guidance, Supporting Professionalism in Admissions good practice guidance, regulations and policies of its awarding bodies, and the Creative Skillset.

1.2 Details of the partnerships with the degree-awarding bodies are outlined in student handbooks. The Board of Governors and the Leadership Group disseminate good practice and oversee academic standards; the Quality Management and Enhancement Committee implements quality procedures and the Academic Board has the role of overseeing academic frameworks and assessment regulations.

1.3 The School disseminates programme details via student handbooks and the very comprehensive School website and virtual learning environment (VLE). Agreements with awarding bodies include details of relevant responsibilities. The level of qualifications are benchmarked by *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and*

Northern Ireland (FHEQ) at appropriate levels (UoW). This was confirmed with academic staff, who advised that the level also meets industry standards.

1.4 The School seeks to unpack 'professional practice' in terms of learning outcomes, the standards for which are considered by the assessment boards for MA Screenwriting and MA Filmmaking and partnership meetings, and outlined in the Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy and recorded in minutes of meetings. Titling of awards is confirmed as being in line with UoW's benchmark statements. Students confirmed appreciation of the academic standards delivered by the School and mentioned resultant positive attributes developed as an outcome.

1.5 The frameworks, regulations and processes in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.6 The review team reviewed awarding body and School documents, including academic regulations, programme specifications, reports of programme approval events and the memorandum of cooperation. They also held meetings with senior and academic staff, including representation from UoW, students, support staff and industry professionals.

1.7 The evidence demonstrates that the School operates comprehensive and well-documented processes. Appropriate consideration is given by the School to the academic level of programmes prior to submitting them for approval. Programmes are clearly titled in line with the FHEQ. Academic standards for each award are reflected on positively by students. External examiners confirm ongoing alignment of learning outcomes and assessment design to relevant external reference points.

1.8 Teaching staff make appropriate use of programme specifications as a reference point in the learning, teaching and assessment of programmes. Programme specifications vary according to the universities' requirements; in each case the qualification is positioned at the appropriate level and there is reference to Subject Benchmark Statements. The School is committed to ensuring that students are aware of the requirements of the different levels of study for their programmes. Students report that they have a clear understanding of the learning outcomes to be achieved through assessment and that they regard assessment information as easily available.

1.9 Discussions in relation to academic level form a key theme in tutorials. Programme teams have extensive experience of developing and writing programmes. Academics are appropriately supported by link tutors from UoW, although both the School UoW acknowledge that this relationship is still in its infancy.

1.10 The processes in place for validation of programmes is clear and robust. There is effective communication between the School and UoW regarding development, validation and ongoing management of all programmes. The School takes appropriate account of external reference points in the maintenance of academic standards and there is close adherence to awarding partners' quality assurance processes. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated 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 School works with its awarding bodies' academic framework to govern how it awards its higher education qualifications and has operational responsibility for delivery of its validated provision. The School has its own quality monitoring and management processes, including annual monitoring and review.

1.12 The School has clear and well-established structures for managing its higher education provision and these operate with due regard to each of the universities' requirements. Academic regulations are made available to staff and students through course handbooks in hard copy and via the VLE. Course handbooks contain information on the programme structure, including its aims, outcomes, descriptions of modules, specifications and assessment methodology. They also provide an overview of teaching and assessment methodology. Students stated that they knew where to find this information and confirmed that they had been briefed on the academic regulations for their awards and were clear on how these operated. The processes in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.13 The review team examined a range of documentation including committee terms of reference, programme and student handbooks, and saw a demonstration of the School's VLE and held meetings with senior and academic staff and students.

1.14 Staff are made aware of their expected involvement in application of academic regulations through membership of relevant committees. The deliberative committee structure within the School includes the Boards of Studies, which predominantly serve feedback purposes, mainly from students to the School. They also consider external examiner reports and Industry Advisory Group reports, as well as annual monitoring documentation. Where appropriate, the Boards of Study recommend any actions to be taken to the Board of Graduate Studies. The Board of Graduate Studies considers, and where appropriate approves, those actions and considers recommendations for enhancing learning, teaching and assessment, and refers them to Academic Board. The Academic Board monitors the performance of all School programmes and advises the Director and Board of Governors on higher education strategy. Minutes of meetings confirm that there is comprehensive oversight of higher education at both programme and School level. Examination boards are convened by the awarding body, with appropriate School representation.

1.15 The School adheres effectively to awarding body processes for the award of academic credit. There is a rigorous system in place to govern the award of academic credit at module and programme level, and assessment decisions are effectively overseen by the Academic Board, prior to forwarding to awarding body examination boards. The School has appropriate internal quality assurance and governance processes to fulfil its responsibilities to its awarding bodies. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated 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

1.16 The responsibility for record keeping is shared between the School and LMU and UoW, with UoE responsible for the records of the PhD provision and the MA International Film Business. However, the School is proactive in ensuring that the information provided within the handbooks are the definitive and final record.

1.17 The School has processes for record checking through the committee structure. Committees have student and industry representation, and there are clear lines for recording and reporting to relevant committees. Records are kept by both the School and awarding bodies.

1.18 The School has made changes to the committee structure and terms of reference in order to provide oversight of the processes for checking records. The input from external examiner reports, annual monitoring reports, feedback from Industry Advisory Groups and students are taken into consideration. Summary reports confirmed at the Academic Board, and actions and responses are agreed at the Board of Graduate Studies.

1.19 The programme handbooks are detailed, covering course content, external content and processes, both at the School and at the awarding bodies. The processes and procedures in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.20 The review team tested the Expectation by reviewing the terms of reference and minutes of committees, the responsibilities of the School and the awarding bodies, the VLE provision, and programme handbooks. The team met senior and academic staff, employers and students.

1.21 The School ensures that it meets the regulations of the awarding bodies, and that records from the programmes specifications are definitive, throughout the information provided to students, both on the VLE and within the handbooks. In addition, students and members from the Industry Advisory Groups to contribute to the provision to ensure that the programme of study is fit for purpose. Students explained to the review team where they can find the information for their programmes within both the handbooks and VLE.

1.22 The School is currently transitioning out of the relationship with LMU, and has recently started working provision with UoW. However, the clear and robust processes and procedures evidenced were confirmed in meetings that the team held with senior and academic staff.

1.23 The School clearly meets its responsibilities, and has demonstrated clear academic governance through the review of its committees and input from key stakeholders. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated 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

1.24 The School adheres to its awarding bodies' requirements for programme approval. During the recent transfer from LMU to UoW, the School revalidated its current programmes without making any significant changes, but the School intends to redesign its curriculum alongside its move to its new premises. UoE runs the MA International Film Business and the doctoral programme, where the School works in a co-supervisory capacity only.

1.25 UoW sets the academic standards for the programmes and level of qualification. Programme documentation reflects these requirements, and university course approval panels confirm that courses operate at, or above, threshold standards. University staff confirm that its process of validation aims to be empathetic to the needs of the School rather than insisting that the School mirrors the universities' approach. This process is the result of careful scrutiny of School and university policies and procedures. The relationship is clearly strong and responsive. Within the School, ultimate responsibility for approval rests with the Board of Governors, but the School's Director has devolved responsibility for academic matters and reports to the Board for its approval. The processes and procedures in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.26 The review team considered documentation such as programme outlines, institutional policies for the School and its awarding bodies, and committee structures and terms of reference. The team cross-referenced this information in meetings with senior managers and teaching staff, and colleagues from UoW.

1.27 The School's Director communicates with UoW's vice-chancellor at executive level. At programme level there is a binary approach, with contacts at delivery level between the School and the academic department at UoW, and between UoW's registry and the School Registrar.

1.28 The School has in place a clear process for programme development, but as yet it is largely unused. The forthcoming programme development is a strategic aim of the new Director, therefore, the impetus to develop programmes will pass through the Academic Board and down through the Board of Graduate Studies to the individual programme teams. The reverse of this process would be the conventional approach to programme development, with ideas coming up from the students and tutors. Both approaches are appropriate and enable staff and student engagement in, and throughout, the process. The School's committee structure in light of programme approval is clear, responsive and iterative.

1.29 The review team concludes that the Expectation is met. The oversight of the awarding bodies and the School's clear committee structure ensures that the associated 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

1.30 The School works within the academic and regulatory framework of its awarding bodies. Students receive credits and qualifications that reflect the achievement of programme learning outcomes set at UK threshold standards.

1.31 The duration of the School's relationship with each university varies, but it is clear that the School's own approach to academic standards is mature and well-developed. The School sets assessments in line with the module specifications approved by its awarding bodies. Student handbooks detail the learning outcomes, and because of the specific nature of the programmes, the learning outcomes are embedded in the assessment tasks. For example, making a film or writing a screenplay is the best way to measure a learning outcome about approaches to making a film or writing a screenplay. This is wholly appropriate for professional-level vocational training and the School's status as a Creative Skillset Centre of Excellence is a further hallmark of the specificity of the programme learning outcomes. The School's precise policies and procedures and the confirmations of external examiner reports further assure the suitability of the learning outcomes. The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.32 The review team considered the responsibilities for each degree-awarding body, programme handbooks and external examiner reports. Conversations with senior and academic staff and colleagues from UoW confirmed these details.

1.33 External examiners review student work termly, accessing practical coursework online or at screenings prior to the Assessment Board, and confirm that the standards are exact and professionally focused. To cover the transition from LMU to UoW, UoW confirmed the appointment of the existing external examiners, ensuring that the School maintained the link between credits and learning outcomes at UK threshold standards during the changeover. Staff confirm that through dialogue with the awarding bodies and external examiners they ensure that the credits awarded are accurate. Students describe their programmes as rigorous and recognise the clarity of the professional, and therefore higher degree, nature of the programmes.

1.34 The review team concludes that the Expectation is met. The oversight of the awarding bodies, Creative Skillset, and the maturity and constancy of the programmes ensures that the associated 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

1.35 The School's processes for monitoring and review carefully follow the requirements of the awarding bodies and allow for reflection on comments from students, staff, external examiners and external advisers. The process is rigorous and reflective.

1.36 The awarding bodies provide templates for annual monitoring, including module and course evaluations. The School has yet to complete a full annual cycle with UoW, but its previous approach for LMU indicates the School's sound approach to monitoring and review. The School reviews annual monitoring through its committees; if colleagues at LMU raise questions or concerns, the School responds through the relevant committee.

1.37 Externally to the School, the LMU Subject Standards Board meets three times a year, followed by a performance enhancement meeting, for which LMU provides performance data. These meetings discuss performance statistics, module logs (reviews), external examiners' reports and student feedback. LMU sets the timings of the meetings. UoW processes are similar and the School is just about to engage with them for the first time. UoW is confident that the transition will be smooth.

1.38 The School has not undergone a periodic review, as its partnership with LMU will end before one is due. UoW intends to run a curriculum review at the end of the first year of the partnership in January 2017. The processes and procedures in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.39 The review team held meetings with senior managers, teaching staff and colleagues from the awarding bodies, which confirmed the full implementation of the procedures set out by the awarding bodies. These are detailed in policies and handbooks provided by the universities, and the School's committee structures and its terms of reference.

1.40 The School gathers information informally through the personal tutorial system. As a small institution this is wholly appropriate and enables the School to be responsive and timely. The School also operates a formal student representative system, which enables each student cohort to raise issues at the relevant Board of Studies. These issues progress to the Board of Graduate Studies and inform the monitoring and review processes. Students also complete termly online surveys to ensure anonymity of response. Staff recognise there can be some mismatch between the verbal and written feedback they receive and are working with the Students' Union to ensure that student representation accurately reflects student views.

1.41 The two MA programmes take slightly different approaches to collating information for their reports, reflecting the nature of each programme. For MA Screenwriting the programme leader leads each module and therefore writes the report. For MA Filmmaking, where each module is headed by a different module leader, the report is a collaborative effort reflecting the seven departments within the programme. Completed annual monitoring reports progress to both the Quality Management and Enhancement Committee and the

Academic Board, and then ultimately to the Board of Governors. The School also sends the final report to the awarding university for consideration by the home academic department.

1.42 The review team concludes that the Expectation is met. The oversight of the awarding universities and the mature internal processes ensure that the associated 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

1.43 The awarding bodies are responsible for externality in relation to the setting of academic standards. External members are appointed to programme approval panels and external examiners are appointed for validated programmes at the School, as shown in the responsibility checklist. The School's main responsibilities in meeting this Expectation are to ensure that appropriate consideration is given to the feedback provided by the appointed external examiners in their annual reports to the awarding bodies.

1.44 The School engages with various external stakeholders in the development and review of programmes. This includes representatives from industry. This principally occurs through dialogue with externals during the development of initial proposals for new provision. The School has an active Academic Board, which promotes skills and employability as being central to its plans. As part of planning, the Board uses a variety of external viewpoints to gather information on future course proposals. Threshold academic standards are set and scrutinised by the relevant university, but the only area in which the university assumes responsibility is student appeals.

1.45 The policies and procedures in place, and the School's approach to the operation of these, would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.46 The review team examined documentation, external examiner reports, annual programme review reports, and Board minutes. The team also held meetings with senior, academic and support staff, students, industry advisory group members and alumni. Staff meetings include representatives from UoW.

1.47 There is effective engagement of external expertise in the maintenance of academic standards within the School. School staff, UoW representatives and employers all confirmed that external expertise is used in programme validation, periodic subject reviews and advising on changes to existing programmes. For example, employers and alumni contribute significantly to the development of course curricula through regular liaison between School staff and representatives from industry. Awarding body staff become involved at an early stage and this ensures that all such proposals meet threshold academic standards.

1.48 The School takes robust steps to engage directly with external stakeholders via the Industry Advisory Groups, and fulfils its responsibilities to its awarding partner for making appropriate use of the expertise provided by external approval panel members and external examiners. For example, the sample of external examiner reports reviewed by the review team confirms that the School maintains academic standards on behalf of its awarding partners. The School effectively summarises the findings from external examiner reports and takes appropriate action on their findings. This helps to ensure the currency and quality of the awards being offered. Individual programme teams have good links with employers, and feedback from industry is used to inform the design and management of the portfolio of

higher education offered by the School. This dialogue is also supported by use of employer engagement to facilitate design of new programmes.

1.49 The School makes effective and appropriate use of relevant external experts at key stages of maintaining academic standards. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated 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 and/or other awarding organisations: Summary of findings

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

1.51 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 School is also required to adhere to the procedures of its awarding bodies. There are no recommendations or affirmations in this section. The feature of good practice relating to the embedding of industry practice and standards throughout the School's provision, which enhances the students' learning experience, also refers to Expectation A3.2.

1.52 The review team concludes that the maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies at the School **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 School has not developed any new programmes since 2012. It is terminating its partnership agreement with LMU and has revalidated the MA Filmmaking and MA Screenwriting with UoW. To ease the transition from one partner to the next, the School chose not to revise the programmes at that point, but intends to review its entire curriculum in the near future.

2.2 Further to Expectation A3.3, strategic oversight of the programme approval process rests with the Leadership Group, which has overall responsibility for the development of the academic work of the School, led by the Director, who then reports to the Board of Governors for approval. In tandem with this managerial process, the School's Academic Board manages the process of programme approval and in July 2016 approved terms of reference for a Curriculum Review Group to undertake work on any existing or future programmes. Following the School's Code of Practice on Course Design, the Group reviews all curriculum, including feedback from students, staff and third parties as well as external reference points. This process is thorough and would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.3 The review team considered documentation such as programme outlines, institutional policies for the School and its awarding bodies, and committee structures and terms of reference. The team cross-referenced this information in meetings with senior managers and teaching staff, and colleagues from UoW.

2.4 The School can draw on an excellent range of support when designing a new programme. The support of the awarding body has been considerable throughout the recent transition. The School can also draw on the expertise and guidance provided by the Creative Skillset. This ensures a scrupulous observance of professional-level demands and criteria. In addition, the School has several Industry Advisory Groups that offer advice and industry expertise and the panel members who met the review team stated that although they had not yet been asked to contribute to the programme development process, they would be happy to do so. It must also be noted that the School draws on the professional expertise of its teaching staff, all of whom are practitioners of considerable standing and who have a highly current view of the industry. In the imminent process of programme revision, the School can draw on an exceptional range of industry advice and insight.

2.5 The review team concludes that the Expectation is met. The relationship with the UoW and its exceptional access to industry advice ensure that the associated 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

2.6 The School has responsibility for the setting and operation of admissions processes and procedures. The School has recently reviewed its admissions process, as actioned by the Leadership Group, and has developed a new Admissions Policy and Procedures along with a one-year Implementation Plan.

2.7 The Leadership Group has a responsibility to oversee the whole admissions process, including recruitment, admissions and fees within the terms of reference.

2.8 The School has an Admissions Policy and Tuition Fee Policy; both are clear about the expectations of the School and the applicant, and demonstrate the process and mapping to the Quality Code, *Chapter B2* in appendix A and B. Although the School has responsibility for admissions, the School works with the awarding bodies to ensure that the information provided for prospective students is accurate and clear.

2.9 Information provided to prospective students about the Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning (AP(E)L) Policy, Tier 4 visas and the selection process is clear. Admissions information, such as information about deadlines, is available to prospective students online via the website.

2.10 The Implementation Plan details how the Admissions Policy is implemented in three stages, given that MA Filmmaking has three points of entry in the academic year (September, January and May). MA Screenwriting only has one intake per year.

2.11 The design of the admissions procedures would allow the School to meet the Expectation.

2.12 To test whether the School had met the Expectation, the review team reviewed the Admissions Policy, Tuition Fee Policy, information available to students, the website, and the Implementation Plan. In addition, the team spoke to senior and academic staff, support staff and students.

2.13 Academic staff are involved in the interview and selection of prospective students. They are involved in different stages of the admissions process, from reviewing the application to the interview stages, which demonstrates that the process for admissions has strong academic input. Support staff provide training to ensure academic staff are following the criteria, for example by observing interviews.

2.14 The Leadership Group reviews the implementation plan, and progress on recommendations is also looked at by the Admissions Manager. The new Admissions Policy has been found to be effective, with only minor practical changes made, such as the procedure for handling Skype interviews.

2.15 Students felt that the processes from applying to arriving at the School were clear and were satisfied with the information provided about the School and the programmes, making this a positive experience. International students are given additional information

about living in London and are helped by support staff to arrange UK bank accounts and find accommodation. An orientation event was held, which allowed students to meet each other socially.

2.16 The School has demonstrated that it has effective procedures in place for recruitment, selection and admissions, which are clear, fit for purpose and help students develop a sense of belonging. Students are well supported and informed throughout. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

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

2.17 The School has a number of policies and operational practices relating to the development of teaching and learning activities. The Learning and Teaching Strategy is described in the Code of Practice on Course Design, Modification, Monitoring and Review, which is used to influence teaching and learning practice on programmes. Approaches to learning and teaching are explained on the School's website, and in programme specifications, module descriptors and student handbooks. Teaching methods are also explained during induction and emphasis is given on how to study the different concepts in filmmaking and scriptwriting via masterclasses and directing workshops. The induction process, fully explained by senior staff, acknowledges and emphasises that each student will have an individual learning style.

2.18 The School places considerable emphasis on the quality of learning, teaching and assessment, which are kept under constant review as part of the School's quality assurance cycle. Detailed understanding of the value and difference between learning and teaching was volunteered. Core values in learning and teaching are stated as including building a safe and positive supportive learning environment. Emphasis is placed on the School's mission in achievement of maximising student potential and enhancing the physical environment with a move to new premises (London City Island), a deliberate strategic change. Further, the overall approach is designed to broaden students' experience through extensive use of client environments, workshop facilities and live projects.

2.19 The Head of Studies has overall responsibility for ensuring the quality of teaching, learning and assessment through organisation of staff development programmes (including with awarding partners) and review of practice. Student data is gathered at the end of each module and analysed by senior staff.

2.20 The policies, procedures and mechanisms in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.21 The review team tested this Expectation by reviewing the School's strategies and policies, annual programme review reports, minutes of the committee meetings, recent higher education self-evaluations and evidence of peer review. Meetings were also held with senior staff, teaching staff and students across the full range of higher education provision.

2.22 Academic staff are involved in updating and enhancing their learning and teaching skills and are supported in personal development by the School. The School employees include leading industry experts. Additionally, they are encouraged to regularly reflect on and discuss their teaching practices through informal peer discussions and through various formal meetings. The School also operates an effective peer observation scheme to encourage academic staff to reflect on and further develop their practice.

2.23 The School has developed an effective approach to staff development, promoted through the Staff Development Strategy, which is overseen by the Staff Development Committee. For example, all staff met by the review team confirmed that the School

encourages and allows time for continuing professional development and specialist workshops. Student feedback indicates that they are satisfied with the skills and experience of academic staff. The embedding of industry practice and standards throughout the School's provision, which enhances the students' learning experience, is **good practice** (see also Expectations A3.2, B1, B6 and Enhancement).

2.24 A teaching observation process is in place for all staff. Observations are ungraded and are based on collaborative reflection and action planning. Teaching staff said that this was a valuable process.

2.25 Regular monitoring and review of teaching practice is conducted through various committees and meetings. For example, minutes of the Academic Board demonstrate that it is effective in its role of monitoring and enhancing learning opportunities. Additionally, regular course team meetings ensure that the quality of the student learning experience is kept under review throughout the academic year, including evidence gathered via student feedback. The Academic Board and course committees appoint student representatives. There are regular opportunities for students to give informal and formal views on teaching and learning quality, for example through regular one-to-one and group discussions with course tutors and leaders. The School draws on a wide range of information in its review of learning and teaching. Sources of information include student achievement and progression data, external examiner reports, results of student feedback surveys and the outcomes of peer observations.

2.26 The provision of online resources, including a well-received VLE is very strong at the School. This is designed and developed to be intuitive and student friendly, and such enhancements have been recognised by all students. The development of a fully interactive virtual learning environment to enable comprehensive support for student learning is **good practice** (see also Expectation C).

2.27 The School has effective processes for the review and enhancement of learning opportunities, pedagogical practice and the learning environment. Further, scholarship in teaching and learning methodology is appropriately undertaken. These processes make appropriate use of information and are adequately informed by the student voice. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated 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

2.28 The Higher Education Strategy, which is underpinned by a set of strategic objectives, outlines the School's commitment to preparing students for a quick changing screen landscape by providing high quality academic and appropriate support in collaboration with students and industry. The School's mission statement refers to giving all students every help in becoming autonomous and innovative filmmakers. The School has clearly defined administrative and academic roles to support students in achieving their qualification. There is a student personal support tutor system and consistent and realistic advice is offered about careers, although it is noted that the majority of opportunities occur within the independent self-employed sector. The Industry Advisory Groups contribute to the relevance of content and development of the programmes through visits to current and potential industry centres and provide input to the annual monitoring reports.

2.29 Ongoing support for student learning and personal needs is provided post-induction through tutorials and services provided by the central administrative and support team. The School has developed a formal Tutorial Policy, which is integral to the approach to formative assessment. The Policy sets each student's entitlement to timetabled tutorials. Students are allocated a dedicated tutor, who supports their academic and personal development. Information is given to students about the role of tutors at induction and in their student handbooks.

2.30 The School states that it involves employers in the educational experience of students as much as possible through the contact with external industry offering some work experience and placements, and through the use of industry experts including Industry Advisory Group members acting as mentors.

2.31 The policies and approaches in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.32 The review team evaluated the School's arrangements through a review of formal policies in this area, minutes of relevant committees, evidence of support services and personal development planning. The team also met senior, academic and support staff and students.

2.33 Tutorial activities are supplemented through informal meetings on an ad hoc basis and students spoke of and appreciated the staff 'open door policy'. The School provides students with a variety of resources such as learning spaces and services to support their learning, including the library, and a range of online learning resources through the VLE. Students have access to a VLE and specialist internet-based programmes, either directly from the School or through relationships with local industry.

2.34 The School has an effective and robust strategic approach to the support of learning and teaching, which manifests itself in a variety of clearly defined ways. Students are satisfied with the availability, range and quality of the resources housed on online platforms and the online resources available to them. Students confirmed appropriate induction activities at the start of each year, through course handbooks and direct support from academic tutors and support services. Students complete an appropriate feedback survey on their induction experience, the results of which are used to make improvements to the induction process for the following year.

2.35 The process of supporting students' learning through tutorials is effective. The format of personal tutorials varies according to the needs of each programme. Tutorials are used to support students' academic development and a record of the meeting is kept to aid personal development planning. Students confirmed that they had timetabled tutorial time but expressed a desire for more of this activity. Staff explained that, due to the intensive nature of teaching and study activities, a balance needed to be reached between available tutorial time and the needs of the full curriculum. Overall, students felt well supported by academic staff and commented on the positive way in which tutors challenged them to develop their academic potential and to achieve personal goals.

2.36 The review team found that students are generally highly satisfied with both the academic and tutorial support available to them, and that they specifically value the support from tutors with current and recent industrial and vocational experience. Students spoke favourably of the specialist facilities available in addition to good teaching, substantial industry contacts and experience. They were of the view that these facilities enable them to develop their academic and professional skills. The proactive and creative engagement with students to engender a strong sense of community that enables the development of their academic, personal and professional potential is **good practice**.

2.37 There is particularly effective employer engagement in all programmes. This gives students access to people working successfully in the industry and to cutting-edge facilities. There are also close links with employers to ensure that both curricular and extracurricular learning opportunities are closely aligned to the employment sector, enabling students to develop current professional skills. The course programmes make regular use of guest speakers from industry and students who have been exposed to these opportunities find this a useful way of linking theoretical learning to practice. Additionally, the School employs industry experts to teach on the whole range of programmes.

2.38 The School has a number of robust and effective mechanisms to support students in developing their academic, personal and professional potential. In particular, students are provided with comprehensive support for learning and are encouraged to develop their employability skills through a range of initiatives. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated 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

2.39 The School states that it has mapped its student engagement against the Quality Code, *Chapter B5*. Following this, the School has reviewed the committee structure and increased student representation to spread the workload and gain further student feedback. This follows a decision from the Academic Board in February 2016 to provide a wider student perspective alongside the Students' Union representative, allowing contributions from the students and valuing their input.

2.40 The School has defined and developed a Code of Practice on Student Engagement, which aligns to the Expectation and was approved by the Quality and Collaboration Committee in July 2014. The School also has a Student Charter within programme handbooks that sets out expectations for staff and students.

2.41 The design and processes in place would allow the Expectation to be met. The School has developed a representational structure that allows students to express their views and work in partnership with staff.

2.42 The review team reviewed the evidence provided by the School to test the Expectation, such as the Student Charter, the School's Code of Practice on Student Engagement and the website. In addition, the team met senior and academic staff, students and support staff.

2.43 The School offers opportunities for students to give feedback about their experience on their course. Each student has a personal tutor who they can contact in regard to academic and personal issues. Students feel they can approach their term tutors and personal tutors and spoke about the open door policy in operation. This was confirmed by academic staff and support staff.

2.44 The School takes student engagement seriously and values the input of students. Student representatives are elected by their peers at the beginning of their studies, and information about their responsibilities is included within the student handbooks and on the VLE. They are provided with training and support to undertake their role proactively. An example of this is the introduction of the new system for selecting projects and unit formation. This was raised by students and addressed at the Academic Board after the Students' Union submitted a proposal to the Registrar.

2.45 Although the School uploads minutes, action plans and progress on the VLE for students to access, there is a mixed response about how students can provide feedback on their experience at the School and how they find out if the School has responded to student feedback. It became clear from meetings that students see surveys as something of a 'last resort' if they feel that previous feedback has not been responded to. Staff agreed that information from student meetings and data from surveys did not always match. The School is looking into this to further improve formal feedback for students, and close the feedback loop. The review team **affirms** the work being undertaken to embed and strengthen formal feedback to students.

2.46 The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated 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

2.47 The School complies with its awarding bodies' assessment policies and regulations, and obtains approval for assessment strategies through the course approval and validation process. It maintains a rigorous approach to assessment.

2.48 Validation processes broadly agree assessment schemes. Programme and module specifications detail assessment methods in accordance with programme learning outcomes, see Expectation A3.2. Student handbooks set out the criteria for final awards. UoE sets assessment tasks for its programmes.

2.49 The School's Code of Practice on Assessment sets out clear processes for internal marking and moderation. Staff double-mark all film work through an anonymised process and against set criteria to ensure consistency and equitable assessment of all students. External examiners confirm the rigour of this approach.

2.50 The School shares responsibility with LMU for monitoring students through an Assessment Board meeting at LMU. For UoW there will be a similar process. UoE monitors students' academic progress through a twice-yearly Partnership Board that receives and discusses student assessments. Co-supervisors at the School also complete an online annual monitoring form about academic progress.

2.51 The School's AP(E)L Policy is available on the School website. The nature of MA Filmmaking and MA Screenwriting means that AP(E)L requirements can differ greatly between programmes. The Policy accommodates the educational and professional background of each applicant. Applicants interested in AP(E)L meet a senior member of academic staff, with the Assessment Boards making the final decision on any application. The relevant head of studies oversees the process to ensure consistency. The processes in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.52 The review team considered a range of assessment-related policies and procedural documents. In meetings with staff, students and Industry Advisory Group members, the team explored how the School enacts these processes. The team also saw a demonstration of the School's VLE.

2.53 Staff provide students with regular and extensive formative feedback, and students confirm the value of this. They admire the detail and insight staff share with them. Through its staff, the School is in regular contact with the industry, ensuring that programmes remain relevant. Professionals give students extensive, industry-level formative feedback throughout the term, supporting the feedback given by staff. All feedback culminates in end-of-term screenings. The depth and industry-relevance of feedback to advance student development is **good practice**.

2.54 The School's Academic Board updates assessment activities if required. For example, the external examiner suggested a review of the word count requirements and the naming of the Work and Research Journal. Once it has approved assessment results,

the Assessment Board publishes these for individual students on the VLE, forming a student assessment record.

2.55 All assessment information is available on the VLE, which has continued to grow in response to student and staff comment. Its comprehensive content is exceptional in its detail and thoroughness (see also Expectation B3).

2.56 The School's Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy details the monitoring of students' academic progress. It clearly sets out programme details and addresses retaking a module where students have failed both the original assessment and reassessment. Students can make only one resubmission, usually at the end of the following term for MA Filmmaking and on a separate resubmission deadline during the following term for MA Screenwriting. Students are clear that they cannot contest a grade, but that they can take on board feedback and resubmit.

2.57 The lack of examples of academic misconduct reflect the nature of the coursework. Students prepare films and screenplays in discussion with staff, which makes instances of plagiarism or other kinds of academic misconduct highly unlikely. If staff suspect any instances of academic misconduct, they defer to the awarding bodies' regulations.

2.58 The review team concludes that the Expectation is met. The thoroughness of the School's approach, noted by external examiners and advisers and demonstrated by the detailed online content, indicates that the associated 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

2.59 UoW confirmed the appointment of the existing external examiners to cover its validated programmes, to ensure continuity and consistency in the transition from one awarding body to another. The examiners were originally appointed by then awarding body, LMU. As the first intakes for the programmes validated by UoW were in January and September 2016, the external examiner reports have not yet been received by the awarding body.

2.60 External examiners attend Assessment Boards and review students' work for progression and award decisions. Appropriate arrangements are stated as being in place for selection of student material.

2.61 The external examiners are mainly required to endorse that the grades, credit and awards are at an appropriate level compared to other institutions before they are presented for ratification at Assessment Boards. The School is required by UoW to respond formally in their annual report to any actions raised by external examiners.

2.62 The processes in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.63 The review team tested the effectiveness of the arrangements and resources for engaging with external examiners through the examination of a variety of documentation, including an evaluation of external examiner reports, minutes of Assessment Boards and the awarding body's requirements for external examiner appointments and engagement. The team also met senior, teaching and support staff from the School, university representatives, and students.

2.64 There is a robust system in place within the School for making effective use of external examiners. Staff value the role of external examiners, who actively work with them in a supportive capacity rather than just for the purpose of verifying academic standards. Advice from external examiners has been used to make improvements across programmes, leading to an enhanced student experience.

2.65 External examiner reports show that they are satisfied with the assessment process at the School and that standards are appropriate for the validated awards and are rigorous, comprehensive, fair, structured and organised. The School engages positively with external examiners and has a well-established system for responding to their formal reports for the purposes of quality assurance and enhancement. External examiner reports are made available to students on the VLE.

2.66 Students met by the review team had a good understanding of the role of the external examiner in assuring the quality of their learning experience. The process of publishing external examiner reports via the VLE was not always recognised by students.

2.67 The processes and practices at the School for all aspects of dealing with external examiners is robust and fit for purpose. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated 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

2.68 The School monitors its programmes through formal and informal mechanisms (see also Expectation A3.3).

2.69 The School's structured annual quality cycle for programme monitoring and review includes processes to address internal and awarding body requirements. For LMU, the School agrees to monitor the programmes at the end of each academic year. Both universities provide a template for this process, although the School has yet to undertake the process with UoW. For LMU, the School completes module logs throughout the year and combines these into an annual course log. It submits these along with student handbooks and staff profiles to LMU. UoE leads the monitoring processes for its joint provision with the School. However, the School can raise issues at biannual partnership meetings.

2.70 The School's Academic Board maintains oversight of all monitoring processes and tracks subsequent progress against agreed actions. Industry Advisory Groups advise on industry developments, although those that met the team during the review indicated that the School could ask more of them. The processes in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.71 The review team considered committee terms of reference, policies and quality guidance for the awarding universities. In meetings with staff, students and industry advisers, the team considered the effectiveness of these processes.

2.72 Student representation runs throughout the School's management system and in particular throughout the monitoring and review processes. Boards of Studies are a forum for students to give direct feedback to the staff. Items are then tracked up through the committee structure to the Academic Board and through to the Board of Governors; feedback then comes back down through the same structure. The School's recent addition of a second student committee member to each key committee is welcome.

2.73 The School also uses anonymised surveys at the end of each term. Students who met the review team described these as the way in which they could address any concerns to which they felt the School has not responded. This would explain the staff impression that feedback from representatives and surveys do not always match. The School is considering how to address this. The School's Academic Board considers all information through receipt of course leaders' reports.

2.74 The review team concludes that the Expectation is met. Although the School aims to tighten the effectiveness of its communication with students when gathering feedback, its approach to monitoring and review is fundamentally secure; the associated 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

2.75 The School has internal complaints procedures that are aligned to the awarding bodies' regulations, and academic appeals are made directly to the awarding bodies as part of their responsibilities. Student complaints procedures have been reviewed as part of the new partnership with the UoW and as part of the OIA requirements.

2.76 There is a three-stage complaints procedure that is fair, timely and explains the process for those making complaints, including shared responsibility with the awarding bodies and who to make a complaint to. Information is accessible to students both on the VLE and within the student handbooks. Complaints relating to the recruitment, selection and admissions procedures are processed by the School's Admissions Manager. The policies and procedures in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.77 The review team examined the responsibilities checklist between the School and the awarding bodies, the complaints procedures, programme handbooks and the VLE. In addition, the team met senior, academic and support staff, and students.

2.78 Students can access the complaints process through the VLE and seek advice from Academic Registry staff. The Registrar has responsibility for deciding whether awarding body involvement is necessary. To date, there have been no complaints made by students through the formal procedures.

2.79 If a student wishes to make an academic appeal, the School provides information on how to appeal to the awarding bodies. This information is made available on the VLE and in student handbooks. Staff confirmed that they are able to signpost the students to the information if they wish to raise a complaint or make an academic appeal.

2.80 Due to appropriate complaints and appeals procedures, and the provision of information to students in line with the awarding bodies' regulations, the review team concludes that Expectation is met and the associated 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

2.81 The School does not offer work placements or any assessed work-based learning opportunities, therefore this Expectation does not apply.

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

2.82 There is one research degree offered at the School: the PhD Film by Practice, which is joint provision with UoE. The programme and its admissions are administered by UoE, apart from complaints directly related to the School rather than the programme, and PhD students being subject to the School disciplinary code.

2.83 PhD students receive information for their studies from UoE but also have access to the School VLE to access regulations, policies and procedures. School co-supervisors complete an annual monitoring form, which is available online, and student progress is reported to the biannual partnership meetings. The processes in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.84 The review team looked at a range of documentation, including partnership agreements and responsibilities, co-supervisor information, and met senior and academic staff.

2.85 Although the greater responsibilities are with UoE, the School ensures that it considers PhD students within its processes. For the admission selection of PhD students, the Director or Head of Studies is invited to the selection panel with UoE. When on the programme, students have a main supervisor located in Exeter and a School co-supervisor.

2.86 Reports on PhD students and their progression are discussed at the School-Exeter Partnership, which establishes the link between the supervisor at the UoE and the co-supervisor at the School. Academic staff confirmed this with the review team and ensure that there is a consistent level of dialogue between all parties.

2.87 Although the PhD provision is the main responsibility of UoE, the School ensures that students on this programme are getting the same support to allow them to develop within their studies as other students. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

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

2.89 All of the Expectations relating to the School's quality of student learning opportunities are met with low risk and there are no recommendations in this area.

2.90 There are four features of good practice identified in this section relating to the embedding of industry practice and standards throughout the School's provision, which enhances the students' learning experience; the development of a fully interactive VLE to enable comprehensive support for student learning; the proactive and creative engagement with students to engender a strong sense of community that enables the development of their academic, personal and professional potential; and the depth and industry-relevance of assessment feedback to advance student development.

2.91 There is one affirmation relating to the work being undertaken to embed and strengthen formal feedback to students.

2.92 The review team concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities at the School is **commended**.

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 School provides information for all stakeholders, in line with the guidance from the awarding bodies, and has procedures to ensure that the public information provided about the programmes and resources at the School is accurate, accessible and reliable.

3.2 The School has a Code of Practice on Information, which provides clear and transparent guidance on the procedures in place to ensure that information is accurate and fit for purpose. This includes a list of responsibilities and stages for reviewing and signing-off information before publication.

3.3 The Academic Board oversees and scrutinises all information before it is sent to the awarding bodies for final approval. In addition, the School keeps records of previously published information, such as the website and handbooks provided on the School VLE, to provide effective version control. In addition, the Head of Marketing and Communications liaises with the awarding bodies to ensure that information is accurate and reliable before going to print, and this is signed-off by the Registrar. All transcripts and certificates are provided by the awarding bodies. Grade, module outcome and award recommendations all take place at meetings of Assessment Boards before they are approved in a separate meeting at the university with no further involvement from the School. The processes in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

3.4 To test the Expectation, the review team reviewed evidence, including the Code of Practice on Information, policies and procedures on admissions, records from the Academic Board, student programme handbooks and the website. The team also held meetings with senior, academic and support staff, students and members of the Industry Advisory Group.

3.5 Admissions information is available to prospective students online via the website. The Admissions Policy and its contents are clear about what the School provides and what is expected from applicants. Following feedback from students this information has been made easier to find on the website.

3.6 All information current students receive can be found on the VLE, alongside an information pack. On the VLE, there is an academic quality page, which is accessible to all staff and students, and includes the improvement plan, external examiners' reports and student feedback. When the team met the students, they confirmed that they were able to find all the information with regard to their studies and academic procedures, such as mitigating circumstances and appeals procedures, and felt that it was clear and transparent to them throughout their student journey. This was also echoed in the academic and support staff meetings, where they were able to direct students to the relevant information and share good practice across the disciplines.

3.7 The School's processes to provide accurate, accessible and reliable information for all stakeholders are robust. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

3.9 The Expectation for this judgement area is met and the associated level of risk is low. There are no recommendations or affirmations in this section. The feature of good practice in Expectation B3, which relates to the development of a fully interactive VLE to enable comprehensive support for student learning, also refers to this judgement area.

3.10 The review team concludes that the quality of the information about learning opportunities at the School **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 Embedded within the School is a quiet approach to sharing good practice and pursuing enhancement initiatives. Staff at the School regard the many examples of enhancement as a professional standard, but need to recognise that this activity is a strategic principle.

4.2 The terms of reference for the School's Board of Graduate Studies, Academic Board and Leadership Group make reference to sharing good practice and oversight of enhancement. In July 2016 the Academic Board approved terms of reference for the Curriculum Review Group with the intention of maintaining current enhancement opportunities in the new curriculum and to disseminate them more widely and identify future opportunities for enhancement of learning opportunities. For example, the introduction of directing workshops into the curriculum after their successful introduction as an extracurricular activity. Enhancement of learning opportunities is deeply embedded in the School's committee structure.

4.3 During meetings with members of staff, it was difficult for them to define good practice or enhancement. The Director recognises that this is a matter of the School having to use the right language and familiarise itself with the definition provided by the Quality Code. This should not be difficult; for instance, the School has secured a three-year contract with Creative Skillset, which recognises the School as a centre of excellence and provides it with funding to finance enhancement initiatives. Staff talk freely about sharing good practice and list myriad examples. The processes in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

4.4 The review team read the committee terms of reference and Creative Skillset documentation. In meetings with staff the team explored the School's understanding of enhancement.

4.5 There is no doubt that the School engages in enhancement activity. Students benefit from working with permanent staff and visiting lecturers, all of whom are practising professionals. Each term the School organises several Q&A events with high-ranking professionals to deepen student knowledge and industry networking. End-of-term screenings involve staff and industry guests, who critique student work in line with professional practice (see Expectation B6). Although the School does not offer assessed placements, it supports students who take these - such as work with the BBC, ITV and other independent production companies.

4.6 The Creative Skillset Course Enhancement Fund supports MA Filmmaking students who wish to work with an industry mentor; all Screenwriting students also work with a professional mentor. A dedicated staff member supports student applications to film festivals to familiarise them with festivals and encourage them to think about promoting their work. In the last year many students submitted films to festivals around the world. The School conducts negotiations on behalf of students for the sale and distribution of their work. MA students have free access to the short courses run by the School workshops arm of the School. The School has secured funding from the British Film Institute to digitise its film archive, which preserves students' learning and achievement, but also provides inspiration for successive years.

4.7 The imminent change of location is a further example of how, at a strategic level, the School is engaging with an enhancement philosophy that is deeply woven into the fabric of its work and history. The School would benefit greatly by finding a clear means of linking all of this activity to its strategic aims, management structures and processes. This is an issue of connectivity, not one of a lack of insight or engagement. The review team **recommends** that the School consolidate its strategic approach to the enhancement of student learning opportunities.

4.8 The review team concludes that the Expectation is met. The quality and range of enhancement initiatives within the School indicates that the associated level of risk is low, even though the School could articulate its approach to enhancement more clearly.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

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

4.10 The Expectation in this area is met and the associated level of risk is low. There is one recommendation in this section relating to the School consolidating its strategic approach to enhancement. There are no affirmations. The feature of good practice relating to the embedding of industry practice and standards throughout the School's provision, which enhances the students' learning experience, also refers to this judgement area.

4.11 The review team concludes that the enhancement of student learning opportunities at the School **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.

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.

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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