

# Review for Specific Course Designation by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

## Regents Theological College

February 2014

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## Key findings about Regents Theological College

As a result of its Review for Specific Course Designation carried out in February 2014, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) review team (the team) considers that there can be **confidence** in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the standards of the programmes it offers on behalf of the University of Chester.

The team also considers that there can be **confidence** in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the quality and enhancement of the learning opportunities it offers on behalf of this awarding body.

The team considers that reliance **can** be placed on the information that the provider produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

### Good practice

The team has identified the following **good practice**:

- the direct engagement with students during timetabling of teaching and assessment scheduling (paragraph 2.6)
- the range and variety of support provided for students (paragraph 2.8)
- the provision of bespoke programme-specific regulations and supplementary module outline documents (paragraph 3.3).

### Recommendations

The team has also identified a number of **recommendations** for the enhancement of the higher education provision.

The team considers that it is **advisable** for the provider to:

- produce a teaching and learning strategy that encompasses their higher education provision (paragraph 2.5).

The team considers that it would be **desirable** for the provider to:

- share all external examiner reports with students (paragraph 1.4)
- raise staff awareness of *Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality* of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (paragraph 2.4)
- provide all students with access to appropriate careers guidance (paragraph 2.9)
- provide more detailed guidance on assignment briefs which includes reference to the appropriate academic level (paragraph 3.4).

## About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Specific Course Designation](#)<sup>1</sup> conducted by [QAA](#) at Regents Theological College (the College), which is a privately funded provider of higher education. The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the provider discharges its stated responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes of study that the provider delivers on behalf of the University of Chester (the University). The review was carried out by Mr Peter Cutting, Dr Iain Mossman, Dr Hayley Randle (reviewers) and Professor Edward J Esche (coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the [Review for Educational Oversight \(and for specific course designation\): Handbook, April 2013](#).<sup>2</sup> Evidence in support of the review included a range of documentation, including policy, procedure and strategy statements, records and minutes of meetings, and information produced for students and staff, including handbooks, curriculum and teaching materials. The team looked at a sample of assessed student work and held meetings with staff and students. It considered external reports from the University.

The review team also considered the provider's use of the relevant external reference points:

- the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code)
- subject benchmark statements
- *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ)
- regulations and guidelines provided by the University.

Please note that if you are unfamiliar with any of the terms used in this report you can find them in the [Glossary](#).

Regents Theological College was founded as Elim Bible College (Elim) in 1925 as the ministerial training establishment of the Elim Pentecostal Church. Elim was initially located in Clapham Park, London, until 1964 when it moved to a new property in Capel, Surrey. In the mid-1980s Elim moved to Nantwich, Cheshire to accommodate further expansion. Elim changed its name to Regents Theological College in 1995 to reflect its broader theological remit. It moved to its present location - West Malvern, Worcestershire - in 2009.

Elim's teaching portfolio began in 1925 as one academic residential year of ministerial training, then expanded to two years in 1959, and finally to three years in 1975. The College created its higher education awards in liaison with a variety of validating bodies from 1992 to the present. It currently teaches 169 undergraduate and 61 postgraduate students on University of Chester-validated awards. It employs nine full-time lecturers, 18 part-time adjunct lecturers and nine administrative staff.

At the time of the review, the provider offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath their awarding body:

### University of Chester

- Cert HE Applied Theology and Youth Ministry (0)
- BA (Hons) Applied Theology (140)
- BA (Hons) Applied Theology and Performing Arts (29)

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<sup>1</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/designated-providers/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/designated-providers/Pages/default.aspx)

<sup>2</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx)

- MA Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies (11)
- MTh Applied Theology (26)
- MRes Applied Theology (3)
- MA Missional Leadership (10)
- PhD Theology and Religious Studies (12)

## **The provider's stated responsibilities**

The College's stated responsibilities are: the strategic development of its higher education; curriculum development; the production of programme specifications and intended learning outcomes; assessment marking and provision of assessment feedback to students; academic and pastoral support; the analysis of student feedback and progression information; student recruitment, admission and induction; the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning; annual monitoring of all provision; work placements and liaison with employers; recruitment, employment and development of all staff; and the quality and accuracy of information it provides for students and stakeholders, including on the web and in hard copy.

The College and University share responsibilities for programme specifications and intended learning outcomes, the quality review of higher education provision, and monitoring student admission, retention and completion. They also share responsibilities for the library and learning resources, the student appeal system and procedures for ensuring the accuracy of public information.

## **Recent developments**

The College changed its awarding body from the University of Wales to the University of Chester in 2012 for all of its provision. As of November 2013, all of its students were registered with the new awarding body. The College upgraded its information technology infrastructure significantly in 2013, and it has also recently begun to build an administrative database which will improve its data processes. It created a new Academic Board in late 2013 and its first meeting took place in February 2014.

## **Students' contribution to the review**

Students studying on higher education programmes at the provider were invited to present a submission to the review team. The Lead Student Representative and incoming Student President coordinated the student submission, which was prepared following consultation with the entire student body. Most of the evidence was gathered through an online survey consisting of 91 questions. The College offered support and provided advice when asked, but the students were given complete editorial control. Students were present at both the preparatory meeting and during the review visit. The team found their views helpful in informing their discussions and in gaining a clear understanding of the student experience.

## Detailed findings about Regents Theological College

### 1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The College's responsibilities for academic standards are effectively managed by a well-designed committee structure. Responsibilities are clearly identified in the agreement between the College and the University. The Academic Board has primary governance on all academic matters. It receives and considers reports from the undergraduate and postgraduate programme committee meetings, which are the key operational groups for maintaining standards. The programme committees receive information from faculty and staff/student liaison committees, which receive minutes from a range of clearly defined functional groups, including the Students' Representative Council and curriculum-based tutor teams. All the committees have clear terms of reference, membership and reporting pathways which facilitate effective information flow and articulation of function.

1.2 The oversight of the management of standards is very effective. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. The College Leadership Team is the executive decision-making body, which defers to the Academic Board and programme committees on academic matters. The Director of Academic Development sits on both the Leadership Team and the Academic Board, which ensures effective oversight because this role has overarching responsibility for all of the College's higher education. The Academic Board has met only once, but the College has a clear vision of how its role will function.

#### How effectively does the College make use of external reference points to manage academic standards?

1.3 The College makes very effective use of external reference points. It achieves full alignment with *Part A: Setting and maintaining academic standards* of the Quality Code through its rigorous implementation of the University's regulations and procedures. Senior staff are fully conversant with the Quality Code and other teaching staff have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of it. The College uses the FHEQ for ensuring appropriate level outcomes. It also uses the appropriate subject benchmark statements for its undergraduate provision and extrapolates the Theology and Religious Studies benchmark statement to cover its level 7 provision.

#### How does the College use external moderation, verification or examining to assure academic standards?

1.4 The College ensured continuity of external oversight and its academic standards by maintaining all its external examiners through the transfer of its higher education provision from the University of Wales to the University of Chester. The College management makes very effective use of external examiner reports, which are consistently positive; for example, the high standard of the double marking and the quality of the constructive feedback provided to students. Useful summaries of external examiner reports with action points are produced, which feed into the appropriate programme committee, which then ensures the implementation of actions. The College does not, however, make copies of external examiner reports accessible to students. It would be **desirable** for the College to share all external examiner reports with students.

1.5 The College is robust in evaluating the effectiveness of the structures and processes it uses to manage responses to feedback provided by external examiners during the year and at the subject assessment boards. The College monitors and evaluates this in two ways. First, senior staff scrutinise external examiners' comments in their reports on progress made on issues identified in previous visits. External examiners regularly commend the College on the timely and effective action taken. Second, external examiners' comments are considered at the subject assessment boards, which are attended by teaching staff, University representatives and external examiners.

1.6 The College effectively shares good practice identified by external examiners. The methods used are formally organised faculty training days and the less formal ongoing dialogue between teaching staff. The annual faculty training days involve significant elements on the discussion and implementation of good practice. Well-established teaching teams regularly discuss teaching, learning and assessment activities, but this activity is not formally recorded. The use of both formal and informal methods of sharing good practice is working well, which is indicated by external examiner reports noting far more good practice than areas in need of improvement.

1.7 In summary, the College effectively manages its responsibilities for maintaining academic standards through its committee structures. It makes appropriate use of external reference points. External verifiers commend the quality of marking, student work and teaching good practice. The College responds appropriately and in a timely fashion to external examiner reports, but they do not make them accessible to students. Overall, the College demonstrates a successful commitment to maintaining academic standards.

The review team has **confidence** in the provider's management of its responsibilities for the standards of the programmes it offers on behalf of its awarding body.

## 2 Quality of learning opportunities

### How effectively does the College fulfil its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities?

2.1 The College successfully manages its responsibilities for the quality of learning opportunities through its committee structure as outlined in paragraph 1.1. The College follows the University's annual collaborative programme monitoring process, which enables it to manage and reflect on the quality of its programmes. This is supplemented by the Annual Partnership Report and Quality Improvement Plan, which allow the College to articulate its enhancement agenda effectively. The College has not yet fully integrated the creation of these reports into its committee cycle because it has only undergone one full cycle of validation with the University; its engagement is, however, appropriate because it has incorporated detailed feedback from staff and students.

2.2 Overall responsibility for the management and enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities is the same as described for the management of academic standards in paragraph 1.2. Other sub-groups contribute appropriately to the management and enhancement of the quality at a more local College level, such as the Finance and IT Committee, the Timetabling and Assessment Steering Group and the Library Subcommittee.

### **How effectively does the College make use of external reference points to manage and enhance learning opportunities?**

2.3 The College uses appropriate external reference points effectively in the management of learning opportunities, as described in paragraph 1.3.

2.4 The College enjoys a strong relationship with the University, and has taken considerable steps to map its curricula and processes for managing learning opportunities to the University's Regulatory Framework and Quality and Standards Manual. As a result, the College's provision is aligned with the Expectations of *Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality* of the Quality Code. Senior managers have a detailed understanding of requirements under *Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality*, but other teaching staff demonstrate a limited awareness of it. It would be **desirable** for the provider to raise staff awareness of *Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality* of the Quality Code.

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

2.5 The College lacks a sufficiently strategic approach to its teaching and learning. It does not have an overarching teaching and learning strategy; however, a number of documents, including 'A Learning Community' and the Higher Education Strategy, refer to the teaching ethos of the institution. A teaching and learning strategy for level 7 distance learning was recently written and an equivalent document for undergraduate distance learning is being developed. The College is also in the early stages of responding to an initiative from the University to develop its strategic approach to teaching and learning further. It is **advisable** that the College produce a teaching and learning strategy that encompasses their higher education provision.

2.6 The College demonstrates strong engagement with students by encouraging feedback on teaching and learning through various means. These include the undergraduate and postgraduate staff/student liaison committees, the Student Representative Council, electronic module feedback forms, open feedback during lecture sessions, and internal and national surveys. Students are also represented on programme committees, the Timetabling and Assessment Group and the Library Subcommittee. The direct engagement with students during timetabling of teaching and assessment scheduling is **good practice**.

2.7 Teaching staff are all well qualified for their positions and must have earned a degree at least one level higher than the level of classes they teach. The College has effective staff recruitment policies and processes outlined in its Faculty Handbook. All teaching staff are approved by the University prior to commencing teaching. Students are positive about teaching quality at the College.

### **How does the College assure itself that students are supported effectively?**

2.8 The College provides exceptional levels of support for all students. An induction week begins the development of students' academic skills, social relationships and cohort cohesion. Student-staff ratios are low, contact hours are high and students see staff as approachable. Students are particularly satisfied with the College's pastoral support mechanisms and demonstrate a broad awareness of them. Students cite tutor groups, the Dean of Students, the buddy system, lecturers, the Student Counsellor and the Student Representative Council as the main pastoral support. All students are allocated to small tutorial groups which meet weekly. Residential students are also offered two additional one-to-one tutorials each academic year. The College provides very good levels of support for students with additional needs. It has developed significant policies and procedures to

manage their academic cycle and has employed a dedicated staff member to assist them, for instance, in constructing individual learning plans. The range and variety of support provided for students is **good practice**.

2.9 The College's engagement with careers training and employability is excellent with regards to church-related work, but limited beyond this. The College is the national training centre for the Elim Pentecostal Church and frequently invites subject-matter experts from within the Church as guest lecturers, a practice students appreciate. It also runs weekly extracurricular classes on communication skills for all students. The College recognises that students interested in careers outside the Church have few formal routes to advice and are reliant on the University. It would be **desirable** for the College to provide all students with access to appropriate careers guidance.

2.10 Work placements are well managed at the College and all programmes offer the opportunity to undertake them. Robust procedures are in place to assist students in finding a placement, to induct placement supervisors and to support students while they are away from the College.

2.11 The College recognises that open learning students, which it defines as part-time students living off campus, have different needs to full-time residential students and offers appropriate support to help these students succeed. Open learners receive prompt responses to email queries, and teaching and learning schedules are communicated in a timely and effective manner. A dedicated three-day induction and orientation period for open learners ensures that they receive parity of treatment with full-time students.

### **How effectively does the College develop its staff in order to improve student learning opportunities?**

2.12 The College has effective staff development processes. Overall responsibility for staff development rests with the Principal in conjunction with the Leadership Team. The Principal conducts annual performance appraisals for every lecturer, which are helpful in determining staff development needs. The Faculty Handbook contains all the relevant policies for full-time, part-time, adjunct and visiting faculty. It also describes the rights and responsibilities of the College faculty towards their own professional development. New staff are assigned a mentor and follow a set induction procedure. Students appreciate the strong profile of subject specialists and practitioners. Support staff are also highly qualified. Many faculty and support staff have long-term experience of the life of the College.

2.13 The College offers effective routes for the maintenance and enhancement of teaching practices. Annual training days disseminate good teaching practice arising from peer review, which includes observation of teaching, and the Academic Board considers a summary report of the activity. Staff regularly attend training days provided by the University and other external training providers. Teaching staff are encouraged to attend pedagogic and subject-specific conferences. There are also opportunities for sabbatical leave allowing staff to undertake personal development.

### **How effectively does the College ensure that learning resources are accessible to students and sufficient to enable them to achieve the intended learning outcomes?**

2.14 The College maintains a suitable range of learning resources, including sufficient library holdings and an adequate information technology infrastructure. Students appreciate the recent improvements to network bandwidth and would like to see such upgrades continued. Students also appreciate the recently introduced College virtual learning



environment (VLE), which supports teaching and learning, but there have been problems with access to the University's student portal. Resources for open learners are appropriate and include remote access to materials through the VLE, facilities for electronic submission of assignments and access to plagiarism software. The Librarian operates flexible hours to accommodate open learners.

2.15 In summary, the College is effective in fulfilling its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities. It uses appropriate external reference points. Senior managers have a good knowledge of *Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality* of the Quality Code, but that knowledge needs to be more generally disseminated among the rest of the teaching staff. The College has an effective staff development process, and it provides accessible and sufficient learning resources for its students. The team noted the need for an overarching teaching and learning policy and better careers advice. It also identified the range of support for students as good practice.

The review team has **confidence** that the provider is fulfilling its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of the intended learning opportunities it provides for students.

### 3 Information about learning opportunities

#### How effectively does the College communicate information about learning opportunities to students and other stakeholders?

3.1 The College effectively communicates information about its higher education provision to students and other stakeholders. It publishes a wide range of information about its undergraduate and postgraduate provision, including new course cards, on its website. The website is easily navigable. It provides student-focused information regarding the College's Mission and the systems the College uses to support students throughout their studies. Hard copies of electronic material are available upon request.

3.2 The College provides accessible and comprehensive information about each programme of study. It also provides sufficient information to enable applications to be made directly via the website. Once enrolled, students undergo an intensive induction period during which they receive further information regarding the programme, student support, resources and facilities. The Student Handbook, which is based on the University's, provides comprehensive information about all aspects of higher education study at the College, including student support mechanisms, quality assurance processes and the regulatory academic framework within which teaching, learning and assessment operate. The College's 'A Learning Community' document outlines caring, serving and worshipping aspects of the programmes and also includes further information regarding the avenues for providing student feedback and access to various student support.

3.3 The College produces detailed programme-level information in accordance with the requirements of the University, including programme-specific handbooks, programme specifications and module guides. The provision of bespoke programme-specific regulations and supplementary module outline documents is **good practice**. Further information regarding learning outcomes and assessments is available on the College's and University's VLEs. The College also produces helpful work placement handbooks to support both the student and the placement provider. Information regarding teaching and assessment schedules is widely available.

3.4 Module guides and module outlines provide assessment criteria indicating expected academic performance, but students would appreciate more guidance particularly when making the transition between levels of study. It would be **desirable** for the College to provide more detailed guidance on assignment briefs which includes reference to the appropriate academic level.

3.5 College-issued guidance enables students to make effective use of the College's VLE, which is used consistently as a repository for programme and module-specific information, including lecture content. Students registered concern that the University's student portal was inaccessible during induction week and that its use was operationally limited to accessing final transcripts post conferment.

**How effective are the College's arrangements for assuring that information about learning opportunities is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy?**

3.6 The College's arrangements for the material it publishes are effective in assuring that the information contained is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. The College is clearly committed to safeguarding the reputation of the University and follows arrangements outlined in the Collaborative Partnership Handbook when producing its information materials. The University approves content of all information the College produces for publication. The College's web-administrator role has been increased substantially from a quarter to a half post in recognition of the fundamental importance of the website as the primary source of information about the College and its provision. The post holder is responsible for ensuring the accuracy of electronic information on the website and social media, and for developing alumni-related information. Inaccuracies in published information identified by students are dealt with promptly by faculty administration staff.

3.7 In summary, the information the College publishes about its higher education provision is accurate, comprehensive, trustworthy and readily accessible to potential users including students, parents and the general public. The team identified the provision of bespoke programme-specific regulations and supplementary module outline documents as good practice, but noted that more could be done to guide students through the transition from one level of study to the next.

The team concludes that reliance **can** be placed on the information that the provider produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

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

Regents Theological College action plan relating to the Review for Specific Course Designation February 2014						
Good practice	Intended outcomes	Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes	Target date(s)	Action by	Reported to	Evaluation (process or evidence)
The review team identified the following areas of <b>good practice</b> that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the direct engagement with students during timetabling of teaching and assessment scheduling (paragraph 2.6)</li> </ul>	Satisfaction in student evaluations and in the minutes of the Staff Student Liaison Committee and programme committees	Continue to consult and use students in timetabling and assessment scheduling	September 2014	Undergraduate Dean and faculty administration	Academic Board	Annual Monitoring Review via student evaluation process; faculty will evaluate effectiveness - the Undergraduate Dean reports to the Academic Board based on reports to him from student academic representatives

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<sup>3</sup> The College has been required to develop this action plan to follow up on good practice and address any recommendations arising from the review. QAA monitors progress against the action plan, in conjunction with the College's awarding body.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the range and variety of support provided for students (paragraph 2.8)</li> </ul>	Enhanced support demonstrated in minutes of the Staff Student Liaison Committee and programme committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Continue to review and improve the effectiveness of student support;</li> <li>ii) monitor provision of staff resources focused on student support;</li> <li>iii) collate student feedback on support for Students With Additional Needs (SWANs)</li> </ul>	September 2014	Dean of Students, undergraduate and postgraduate deans	Academic Board	<p>Dean of Students reports periodically to the Academic Board and the Postgraduate and Undergraduate Programme committees</p> <p>This will be a formal written report</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the provision of bespoke programme-specific regulations and supplementary module outline documents (paragraph 3.3)</li> </ul>	Satisfaction in student evaluations and updated information on the virtual learning environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Continue to provide, review and update programme-specific regulations and module outline documents</li> <li>ii) ensure module outlines updated on virtual learning environment a week before semester commences</li> </ul>	September 2014	<p>All faculty and Academic administrators</p> <p>Undergraduate and postgraduate deans review module outlines</p>	Academic Board	Academic Dean reports to the Academic Board with details recorded in the minutes
<b>Advisable</b>	<b>Intended outcomes</b>	<b>Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes</b>	<b>Target date(s)</b>	<b>Action by</b>	<b>Reported to</b>	<b>Evaluation (process or evidence)</b>
The team considers that it is <b>advisable</b> for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>produce a teaching and learning strategy</li> </ul>	A teaching and learning strategy document is incorporated into the	The Academic Board to dedicate part of its strategic focus day in	January 2015	Subgroup of the Academic Board	Academic Board	A teaching and learning strategy to be

that encompasses their higher education provision (paragraph 2.5)	existing academic framework	September 2014 to discussing and confirming a teaching and learning strategy				incorporated within the University's Annual Monitoring Report Review 31 December 2014
<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Intended outcomes</b>	<b>Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes</b>	<b>Target date/s</b>	<b>Action by</b>	<b>Reported to</b>	<b>Evaluation (process or evidence)</b>
The team considers that it is <b>desirable</b> for the provider to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>share all external examiner reports with students (paragraph 1.4)</li> </ul>	<p>External examiner reports to be available to students by uploading to the Student Portal (virtual learning environment)</p> <p>Students use the virtual learning environment to access both these reports and faculty tabulated responses</p>	The last three years of undergraduate external examiner reports and last two years of postgraduate external examiner reports together with recent Academic Quality Support Services' summaries and the faculty tabulated responses to be placed on the student virtual learning environment	September 2014	Database Manager and the Academic Registrar	Academic Board, Undergraduate and Postgraduate committees when done	<p>Monitor the availability of reports by students on the virtual learning environment</p> <p>Confirmation of availability will be recorded in the Academic Board minutes after implementation each year</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>raise staff awareness of <i>Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality</i></li> </ul>	Part B is cross-referenced to existing and future internal academic policy statements, frameworks	Review existing internal documents in order to cross-reference; Make sure Part B of the Quality Code is a standing	September 2014	Academic Registrar	Academic Board	Review of documentation by a subcommittee of the Academic

of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (paragraph 2.4)	and documents	item on the Academic Board and Programme Committee agenda; ensure incorporated into end-of-year staff training events				Board  Academic staff appraisals will record efforts to raise awareness of Part B of the Quality Code
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide all students with access to appropriate careers guidance (paragraph 2.9)</li> </ul>	<p>Designated times are allocated in the academic year to consider appropriate careers advice</p> <p>i) in week 15 of the autumn semester incorporating alumni students, careers advice workshops;</p> <p>ii) a morning workshop is scheduled for May 12 2014 when the Head of Christian Vocations is coming in</p> <p>That same afternoon adjunct tutor is coming in to lead a Strength Finders' seminar;</p> <p>iii) a document on careers advice to be written for performing arts students</p>	<p>Make provision for a formal slot within the academic calendar in week 15 of the autumn semester; monitor attendance/effectiveness of morning and afternoon workshops on 12 May 2014; complete a document for Performing Arts students</p>	September 2014	Undergraduate Dean/Dean of Students/ Performing Arts Course Leader	Programme Committee	Leadership Team to review effectiveness of introduction of processes, with the findings of the Leadership Team to be recorded in the minutes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide more detailed guidance on</li> </ul>	Designate slots at the beginning of the academic calendar	Provide one hour slots at the beginning of the academic year as follows;	September 2014	Undergraduate Academic Dean	Programme Committee	Academic Dean to report to the Academic

assignment briefs which includes reference to the appropriate academic level (paragraph 3.4)	focusing on overview of assignments by level 4, 5 and 6	level 4 induction week and levels 5 and 6 in the first week				Board, with the relevant details captured in the minutes of the Board
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## About QAA

QAA is the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. QAA's mission is to safeguard standards and improve the quality of UK higher education.

QAA's aims are to:

- meet students' needs and be valued by them
- safeguard standards in an increasingly diverse UK and international context
- drive improvements in UK higher education
- improve public understanding of higher education standards and quality.

QAA conducts reviews of higher education institutions and publishes reports on the findings. QAA also publishes a range of guidance documents to help safeguard standards and improve quality.

More information about the work of QAA is available at: [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk).

More detail about Review for Specific Course Designation can be found at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/designated-providers/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/designated-providers/Pages/default.aspx).



## Glossary

This glossary explains terms used in this report. You can find a fuller glossary at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary). Formal definitions of key terms can be found in the [Review for Educational Oversight \(and for specific course designation\): Handbook, April 2013](#).<sup>4</sup>

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

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

**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).

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

**differentiated judgements** In a Review for Specific Course Designation, separate judgements respectively for the provision validated by separate awarding bodies.

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

**external examiner** An independent expert appointed by an institution to comment on student achievement in relation to established academic standards and to look at approaches to assessment.

**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*.

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

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

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

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<sup>4</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx)

**operational definition** A formal definition of a term, which establishes 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.

**provider(s) (of higher education)** Organisations that deliver higher education. In the UK they may be a degree-awarding body or another organisation that offers programmes of higher education on behalf of degree-awarding bodies or awarding organisations. In the context of Review for Specific Course Designation the term means an independent college.

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

**quality** See **academic quality**.

**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. Internal reference points may be used by providers for purposes of self-regulation; external ones are used and accepted throughout the higher education community for the checking of standards and quality.

**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.

**threshold academic standards** 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 for higher education qualifications** and **subject benchmark statements**. See also **academic standards**.

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

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