

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

The Academy of Contemporary Music Ltd

January 2014

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Key findings about The Academy of Contemporary Music

As a result of its Review for Specific Course Designation carried out in January 2014, the 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 Middlesex University and the University of Surrey.

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 these awarding bodies.

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 specialised role of the Educational Strategist (paragraph 1.3)
- the Course Notes for supporting teaching staff (2.5)
- the availability and use of 'kiosks' for gathering and responding to student feedback (paragraph 2.7)
- the monitoring of student progress through in-house designed software, especially for students at risk (paragraph 2.9)
- the support for students with special needs (paragraph 2.10)
- the extensive links with the music industry to support student learning (paragraph 2.11)
- the comprehensive range of resources on the student portal that are highly appropriate for contemporary music (paragraph 2.16)
- the highly informative Induction Booklet (paragraph 3.3).

Recommendations

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

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

- make evidence of second marking clearer on the assessment forms (paragraph 1.7)
- extend the peer observation scheme in the Business School to the other schools (paragraph 3).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Specific Course Designation](#)¹ conducted by QAA at The Academy of Contemporary Music Ltd (the Academy), 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 Middlesex University and the University of Surrey. The review was carried out by Ms Rebecca Court, Dr Elaine Crosthwaite, Mr Brian Whitehead (reviewers) and Mr Philip Markey (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](#).² Evidence in support of the review included meetings with staff and students; external examiner reports; annual monitoring reports; validation reports; student feedback; and student handbooks. The team used minutes of the Board of Study, examination boards, programme meetings and the Education Management Team.

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

- UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code)
- *Subject benchmark statement: Music*
- Learning and Quality Enhancement Handbook, Middlesex University
- Academic Standards Guidelines for University of Surrey programmes.

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

The Academy is a training provider of contemporary music education. It was established in 1995 and is one of the largest providers of popular music education in the world, with programmes that cover performance, production and business. In 1999, it gained approval from Middlesex University to deliver higher education programmes in Contemporary Music Performance. In 2007, it gained Associated Institution status with the University of Surrey to deliver higher education programmes in Music Production and Business. Connected Institution status with both Universities provided access to HEFCE funding until recent changes in the funding regime.

There are 742 full-time higher education students. Since 1997, the Academy has partnered with Guildford College to deliver further education programmes, providing students with access to higher education. The campus is based in the centre of Guildford in four buildings within a few minutes' walk of each other. The Academy is organised into three schools: Business, Performance and Production.

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

Middlesex University

- Cert HE Professional Music Performance (31)
- BMus (Hons) Professional Music Performance (385)
- Cert HE Professional Sound Production (13)

¹ www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/designated-providers/Pages/default.aspx

² www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx

- BA (Hons) Professional Sound Production (139)
- Cert HE Music Business and Innovation (6)
- BA (Hons) Music Business Innovation (51)

University of Surrey

- BA (Hons) Creative Sound Design for New Media (12)
- BA (Hons) Creative Music Production (67)
- BA (Hons) Music Business (38)

The provider's stated responsibilities

The Academy's responsibilities are clearly set out in the agreements with Middlesex University and the University of Surrey. It is responsible for most aspects of managing higher education, but shares responsibility for the quality review of the provision, the student appeal system and ensuring information about learning opportunities is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy with the two awarding bodies. The Academy is responsible for admissions, curriculum development, assessment, student support and learning resources.

Recent developments

From September 2013, all students are registered on programmes validated by Middlesex University. This follows a decision by the University of Surrey to scale down its collaborative partnerships and the desire of the Academy to work with a single awarding body. To minimise disruption to final-year students on the University of Surrey programmes, 'teach-out' arrangements have been put in place.

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 students provided a submission in the form of a video presentation with the support of technical staff. The team met a sample of students from all programmes during the visit. In both the submission and in the meetings, students expressed satisfaction with their learning experiences.

Detailed findings about The Academy of Contemporary Music Ltd

1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The Academy fulfils its responsibilities for the management of academic standards. However, there is some lack of clarity in roles and terms of reference of the committees. Senior staff are aware of this and are reflecting on the management systems. The Academy is in the process of revising its committee structure, which will become operational within the next two months, to ensure a clearer and more effective system of management.

1.2 The Executive Board, which takes an active role in the management process, has ultimate responsibility for academic standards. The Board provides a visionary and ambitious focus for the management and development of the Academy. The Education Management Team is responsible for the operational aspects of management. The Chief Operating Officer, who chairs the Education Management Team, has responsibility for the day-to-day management of academic standards. Programme meetings provide thorough overall monitoring of the respective programmes.

1.3 The monitoring and reviewing reporting process is thorough. The Academy takes seriously the continued development of its structures and processes. Several members of the management group, including the executives, have visited and explored how other institutions function and have discussed how best practice can be included in the Academy's structures and processes to ensure further improvement. Key to this approach is the Educational Strategist appointed with two major roles, namely to research the higher education and industry sector to ensure that the management teams have detailed and current information to inform the Academy's forward planning. The Educational Strategist also works closely with the awarding bodies in, for example, the validation process. The specialised role of the Educational Strategist is **good practice**.

1.4 Comprehensive annual monitoring reports provide the Academy and the Universities with an opportunity to review academic standards. The Board of Studies is aligned with the individual validating university requirements. It is also a formal channel of communication between staff and students. Academy reports and committee minutes are detailed and indicate clear action plans and responsibilities. Action plans are regularly checked by senior management.

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

1.5 The Academy successfully makes use of several external reference points to manage its academic standards. The validating process involves alignment with the Quality Code, ensuring the Academy's programmes meet the expectations in areas such as learning outcomes, assessment practices and accreditation for prior learning. Knowledge of the Quality Code in the Academy is developing. There is an ongoing process of mapping current activities against the precepts set out in the Quality Code. There have been a series of staff development sessions.

1.6 The Academy's programme design and content is also informed by UK and international music industry reference points. Programmes are aligned with the *Subject benchmark statement: Music*, which is reflected in the programme specifications.

The Academy has been successfully reviewed and accredited by the British Accreditation Council.

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

1.7 The Academy diligently carries out its delegated responsibilities for setting and marking assignments. It also provides feedback to students. The initial responsibility for assuring standards is with the Heads of Schools who ensure that assignment tasks are verified and linked with intended learning outcomes. Verification of marks is completed by the Schools. All performance is marked in line with the guidelines provided to students in the brief and is assessed by at least two staff. Where external examiners are not able to attend the assessment of performances, video records are provided. With written assignments, the evidence of second marking is less regular and varies between Schools. Failing assignments are subject to second marking. An irregular profile of marks can bring about second marking. The Academy is expected to follow the Universities' ratio of second marking of one in ten. The assessment forms did not always indicate second marking. It would be **desirable** for the Academy to make clearer reference to second marking on the student assessment form.

1.8 The Schools compile clear and accurate assessment outcomes which are carefully checked. These are considered by the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee. They are then approved by Progress and Assessment Boards, which include staff from the Universities and the Academy.

1.9 The external examiners are appointed by the Universities. The Academy works closely with its external examiners. External examiners' reports refer to a high standard of teaching, learning and assessment. When issues or problems are reported, the Academy responds fully and deals with the issues in a timely manner. The Academy is looking at ways to make greater use of external examiner reports. For example, the Quality Assurance meetings are developing ways to strengthen the internal processes to ensure the responses to external examiners are monitored, actions are followed up and greater use is made of the reports to enhance the provision.

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 bodies.

2 Quality of learning opportunities

2.1 The Academy effectively discharges the responsibilities delegated by its awarding bodies for managing learning opportunities. It is responsible for most aspects of managing the quality of learning opportunities including admissions, curriculum development, student support and learning resources, and shares responsibility for matters such as annual monitoring and student appeals. A 'teach-out' arrangement to transfer provision from the University of Surrey to Middlesex University is being implemented.

2.2 The Academy has recently developed a Learning and Teaching Strategy to be implemented from February 2014. Monitoring achievement will be through Schools' operational plans which have targets and dates for reviews, with oversight by the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee. The degree programmes are delivered over two years. This mode of delivery was carefully reviewed at the validations. The Academy is monitoring the student experiences of the two-year programmes. Another development includes the recently established Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee which will report to the Executive Board.

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

2.3 The Academy successfully makes use of external reference points as stated in paragraph 1.2. It has engaged with the Quality Code through the Middlesex University validation process. A mapping of practices to the precepts of the Quality Code highlighted a need to enhance monitoring at module level, retention strategies and student engagement. This process has informed the development and terms of reference for the new committee structure.

2.4 The Academy makes effective use of external links with the music industry in enhancing learning opportunities. In particular, the partnership with Metropolis Studios enables both staff and students to have access to expertise. Tutors who are employed in other higher education institutions and in industry bring academic and vocational experience to programmes. The Academy has also established links with other higher education institutions with some at strategic level to share best practice. Middlesex University external examiners have commented on the quality and relevance of the Academy's programmes.

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

2.5 The Academy has a range of well-defined and effective measures to assure itself of the quality of teaching and learning. These include the provision of professionally produced Course Notes for teaching staff, peer observation and the use of student feedback. Heads of schools are responsible for the oversight of teaching and undertake tutor training, formal and informal observation of teaching and discussion of best practice in departmental meetings. Weekly Education Management Meetings and bi-weekly interdepartmental meetings ensure that any issues are speedily resolved. Confirmation that teaching and learning is satisfactory is obtained from the annual monitoring reports for the awarding bodies. The Course Notes are provided for every teaching session. These play a key role in making sure staff are aware of the shared intended learning outcomes. They also ensure consistency of approaches by staff. These are especially helpful for the many part-time staff delivering the teaching. The Course Notes for supporting teaching staff are **good practice**.

2.6 Student feedback is obtained through surveys and module feedback. Students complete a post-induction survey and a module feedback form on completion of each module. The forms are a standard template with slight variations, in which students rate the subject matter, teaching, facilities, clarity of assessment and usefulness of feedback. The results are collated and discussed with staff at programme level. Weak areas are addressed. Students expressed a high level of satisfaction with the quality of teaching and learning.

2.7 The Academy involves students in quality assurance processes through a system of student representatives who attend Boards of Study meetings. Students have participated in the National Student Survey through Middlesex University and action points are indicated in annual monitoring reports. Students were involved in the internal review of the BMus Professional Music Performance. Staff use informal means of obtaining feedback, including Heads of Schools obtaining students' views during breaks in peer observation. The Academy also obtains rapid feedback and an insight into student opinion through 'kiosks'. These are terminals at key locations around the campus, which enable students to obtain information and provide feedback, which is checked and disseminated by a member of support staff. Students confirmed that there is good communication between the Academy and students through a range of feedback processes. The availability and use of kiosks for gathering and responding to student feedback is **good practice**.

2.8 The Academy has taken action to improve the form and timeliness of assessment feedback by implementing online submission, marking and feedback. A bespoke system designed in-house enables students to access progress reports and feedback. The Academy policy is for marked work to be returned within three weeks. The feedback provided to students is monitored by heads of schools, and a recent external examiner's report praised the quality of feedback. Students indicate that assessment feedback is useful and timely.

How does the Academy assure itself that students are supported effectively?

2.9 The Academy assures itself that students are supported effectively through the monitoring and feedback processes. It has sound arrangements for student academic and pastoral support through tutorial and mentoring meetings and an effective system for identifying students 'at risk'. Students have an allocated tutorial time for each module which they book electronically. Tutor mentors provide weekly support. A new system enables tutors to log absences and any issues arising from tutorial sessions. The Retention Team, working with academic staff, are then able to allocate appropriate support. These systems are especially useful in monitoring the impact of the two-year programmes. The rigorous systems for monitoring student progress through the in-house designed software, especially for students at risk, are **good practice**.

2.10 The Education Guidance Team assists students with special educational needs through individual tutorials and other support. Students commented on the effective support for dyslexic students. The Academy makes effective use of former students to attend classes to take notes and help with the use of equipment. One-to-one classes are provided when students need more support in aspects such as music theory and sight-reading. The specialist student support and guidance is **good practice**.

2.11 The Academy provides students with direct links to the music industry and support for professional development. There are extensive opportunities for extracurricular activity through professional workshops and master classes, which enable additional skill development. The Industry Link team supports students through facilitating internships and work opportunities. Students said that they greatly valued these opportunities. The extensive links to the music industry to support learning is **good practice**.

How effectively does the Academy develop its staff to improve student learning opportunities?

2.12 There are sound arrangements for staff development to build on tutors' industrial and academic experience. There is a staff training log of academic and teaching qualifications, which shows that 52 per cent of tutors hold a degree and 21 per cent are qualified to master's level or above. Staff have extensive practical experience in the music industry. The Academy ensures that teaching and assessment of the level 6 dissertation modules is conducted by tutors with master's degrees. All tutors have a teaching qualification, and new tutors without initial teacher training undergo a four-day Professional Teaching for the Life Long Learning Sector course. Staff development includes study for higher degrees, a tutor training day prior to the start of the academic year and other internal training, and continuous personal development in the music industry. Staff have also benefited from staff development provision at the validating Universities. The Academy recognises a need to further develop academic staff training and development opportunities.

2.13 The Academy has an annual appraisal system as well as a tutor observation scheme, which enables identification of staff development needs. Tutor observation is conducted at least once annually by heads of schools, and in addition, staff informally observe sessions and undertake team teaching so that good practice is shared.

The Business School also has a peer observation scheme, and holds training sessions where good practice is shared. One of the tasks of the new Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee will be to drive the extension of peer observation across the Academy. It would be **desirable** for the Academy to extend the peer observation scheme in the Business School to other schools.

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

2.14 The Academy has effective systems to ensure the provision of appropriate learning resources, including physical resources such as practice rooms and studios, online resources and teaching materials. Budgets are set at strategic level for ongoing maintenance and updating of equipment and facilities, and spending is devolved to the heads of schools. In addition, requests can be made for special purchases, such as studio desks. The new Finance and Resources Committee will hold responsibility for managing budgets for learning resources.

2.15 Heads of schools are responsible for ensuring that resources are matched to programme and student needs. There is a robust booking system which enables students to book studios and rooms, using an individual credit allowance. The Academy monitors usage so that additional facilities can be provided if necessary. Students confirmed that this system works effectively, although additional practice rooms are needed. Module feedback forms also indicated that improvements can be made in facilities and technical support. The Academy is aware of the need to obtain more space to provide more facilities. During the drafting of the Learning and Teaching Strategy, students were surveyed to establish their priorities, and matters such as provision of resources were identified.

2.16 The Academy has a Creativity Centre with workstations that provide access to online resources through the student portal MyACM. Students have access to library services at the University of Surrey by purchasing corporate lending cards. There are no resource implications arising from the transfer of programmes from Surrey to Middlesex University, as the Academy provides all necessary resources in-house. The Academy has developed a portal that contains an extensive range of learning materials that are highly appropriate for contemporary music. These include tutor notes, information about the music industry and law and access to music performance materials. The comprehensive range of resources available through the student portal that are highly appropriate for contemporary music is **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 Academy communicate information about learning opportunities to students and other stakeholders?

3.1 The Academy has a range of well-produced and clear information about learning opportunities, including a prospectus, programme information, website and marketing materials. The website is a clear reference source for potential students, providing detailed information. Application processes are clear and fees are visibly displayed and updated annually in line with the timeline for reviewing the prospectus.

3.2 Internal information is available to students and staff through the student portal. Programme information is accessible, accurate and consistent. The Academy has an active social media system for communicating with students in addition to emails, texting, the student portal and posters, demonstrating that there is a robust communication system in place to ensure information reaches students. The student and staff handbooks outline guidance, policies and awarding body information.

3.3 Pre-arrival and induction materials for students provide comprehensive information. The student handbook and programme specifications are available through the portal. Students receive a range of orientation documents and activities that supplement the student handbook. There is a bespoke system that handles first enquiry through to enrolment. Pre-programme information needs are identified in advance. The Induction Booklet is particularly comprehensive and provides students with accurate and accessible information. The Academy carries out a survey on the quality of pre-arrival and induction materials. This is used by the Head of Student Services to shape the next induction. The highly informative Induction Booklet is **good practice**.

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

3.4 The approval process for public information ensures all information is signed off and checked before material is uploaded. The annual content review in line with prospectus publication, alongside the engagement between the Marketing Team and Heads of Schools through weekly meetings, ensure content is up to date. Staff have a good understanding of responsibilities and processes. The Marketing Team obtain information on programme content and module updates from each School Manager. It puts this into an appropriate layout to ensure consistency across the Academy. School Managers are responsible for signing off material. Updates are discussed at weekly minuted student services meetings. The Director of Education signs off marketing material with the Education Strategist.

3.5 The agreement with Middlesex University clearly describes arrangements between the institutions for the production and approval of published information, including programme handbooks, advertising, publicity material and websites. The Academy assumes full responsibility for all internal and external materials. The University retains the right to monitor and approve all publicity material and programme handbooks. The student handbooks are prepared from the validation documents. The Academy operates within the terms of agreement for both awarding bodies. Advertising and promotional material is signed off by the awarding Universities.

3.6 Information is available to students on completion of their studies through the Industry Link network on the website. The website contains a large section on alumni, profiling leavers' destinations and comments on their experiences at the Academy. This acts as a resource for prospective and current students. Currently, the Academy is not part of the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Longitudinal Survey, but it is moving to become part of that process. The Marketing Department is responsible for liaising with alumni to gather information to be used in promotional material about leavers' destinations.

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 plan³

The Academy of Contemporary Music action plan relating to the Review for Specific Course Designation January 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 good practice that are worthy of wider dissemination within the Academy:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the specialised role of the Educational Strategist (paragraph 1.3) 	<p>To inform strategic decision making throughout the organisation by remaining abreast of current educational thinking and policy</p> <p>To build relationships with other higher education institutions (HEIs) at executive, senior management and faculty level to support good practice within the institution</p>	<p>To attend conferences, seminars and other external events as required</p> <p>Regularly network with HEIs and other education providers through meetings, conferences etc</p>	<p>Monthly</p> <p>Monthly</p>	<p>Education Strategist</p> <p>Education Strategist</p>	<p>Executive Board</p> <p>Executive Board</p>	<p>Minutes of Policy and Strategy Committee and Senior Team meetings</p>

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³ The Academy 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 Academy's awarding bodies.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Course Notes for supporting teaching staff (paragraph 2.5) 	<p>Provide a comprehensive overview of each programme and module content for teaching and learning</p>	<p>To review and update Course Notes on a termly basis</p>	<p>1 June to 31 August 2014</p>	<p>Heads of schools</p>	<p>Head of Teaching and Learning</p>	<p>Student and staff feedback mechanisms</p>
		<p>To publish and disseminate to staff and students on programme</p>	<p>1 September 2014</p>	<p>Heads of schools</p>	<p>Head of Teaching and Learning</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the availability and use of 'kiosks' for gathering and responding to student feedback (paragraph 2.7) 	<p>To continue to provide effective and immediate feedback mechanism for students</p>	<p>Continuation of provision of 'kiosks' at key locations across the campus</p>	<p>Annually in August of each academic year</p>	<p>IT Team</p>	<p>Chief Operating Officer</p>	<p>Through formal committee process evidenced through minutes</p>
		<p>Data reviewed weekly</p>	<p>Weekly</p>	<p>Heads of schools and other key stakeholders</p>	<p>Chief Operating Officer</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the monitoring of student progress through in-house designed software, especially for students at risk (paragraph 2.9) 	<p>Student engagement and progress is monitored weekly</p>	<p>Retention team and support staff review data weekly to identify actions for each student identified as at risk</p>	<p>Weekly</p>	<p>Mentor Manager</p>	<p>Chief Operating Officer</p>	<p>Retention Team meeting minutes</p>
		<p>SMART in-house designed software is reviewed and maintained regularly</p>	<p>Weekly</p>	<p>IT Specialist</p>	<p>Chief Operating Officer</p>	<p>Through formal committee process evidenced through minutes</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the support for students with special needs (paragraph 	<p>To provide comprehensive, effective and accessible individualised support to</p>	<p>Provision through pastoral support mechanisms</p>	<p>Daily</p>	<p>Education Guidance Team</p>	<p>Head of Teaching and Learning</p>	<p>Through formal committee process</p>

2.10)	all students	Provision through academic support mechanisms	Daily	Heads of schools	Head of Teaching and Learning	evidenced through minutes and Annual Monitoring Reports
• the extensive links with the music industry to support student learning (paragraph 2.11)	To ensure industry relevance is embedded in the delivery of the programmes to support student learning	To budget for and deliver industry professional guest lecturers and other associated professional activities	Annually in August of each academic year	Heads of schools	Chief Operating Officer	Through formal committee process evidenced through minutes and Annual Monitoring Reports
	To provide extracurricular industry linked activities such as professional workshops and masterclasses	To budget for and deliver extracurricular industry linked activities such as professional workshops and masterclasses	Annually in August of each academic year	Heads of schools	Chief Operating Officer	Through formal committee process evidenced through minutes and Annual Monitoring Reports
• the comprehensive range of resources on the student portal that are highly appropriate for contemporary music (paragraph 2.16)	To provide access to learning support materials (course notes and so on)	Course materials to be delivered to students through multiple platforms and media	Commencement of each FHEQ level (three times per academic year)	Heads of schools/ Publishing Manager/IT Department	Chief Operating Officer	Through formal committee process evidenced through minutes and Annual Monitoring Reports
	To provide peer-to-peer student engagement through dedicated portal	Student portal maintained and supported by dedicated IT team	Student portal to be available for all students (new and continuing) at the commencement of each academic year	School Manager/IT Department	Chief Operating Officer	Through formal committee process evidenced through minutes and Annual Monitoring Reports
• the highly informative Induction	To provide a comprehensive Induction Booklet in support of the	Review Induction Booklet text in advance of each academic year	31 August of each academic year	Heads of schools	Chief Operating Officer	Through formal committee

Booklet (paragraph 3.3).	induction programme delivered to all new students	To ensure information is accurate and available in a timely manner				process evidenced through minutes and Annual Monitoring Reports Student feedback mechanisms
Desirable	Intended outcomes	Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes	Target date/s	Action by	Reported to	Evaluation (process or evidence)
The team considers that it would be desirable for the provider to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> make evidence of second marking clearer on the assessment form (paragraph 1.7) 	<p>Clarify the marking and moderation process</p> <p>Ensure all staff are trained appropriately and that the marking and moderation process is adhered to</p>	<p>Prepare marking and moderation process grid in line with validating university regulations</p> <p>Implement INSET for all academic staff in revised marking and moderation process</p>	<p>31 March 2014</p> <p>Commencement of academic year 2014-15</p>	<p>Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manager</p> <p>Head of Teaching and Learning</p>	<p>Chief Operating Officer</p> <p>Chief Operating Officer</p>	<p>Teaching and Learning Committee minutes and Annual Monitoring Reports</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> extend the peer observation scheme in the Business School to the other Schools 	Extend the peer observation process to the Production and Performance Schools	<p>Heads of schools to be trained in peer observation</p> <p>Peer observation schedule to be drawn up and operated</p>	Commencement of academic year 2014-15	Head of Teaching and Learning	Chief Operating Officer	Annual Monitoring Reports

(paragraph 2.13).		Outcomes from peer observation to be shared including good practice				
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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.

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.

Glossary

This glossary explains terms used in this report. You can find a fuller glossary at: 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](#).⁴

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 Courses 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).

⁴ www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx

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

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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