



# **Amity London Business School**

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

September 2012

## Key findings about Amity London Business School

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in October 2012, 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 awards it offers on behalf of Anglia Ruskin University.

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 accuracy and completeness of the information that the provider is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

### Good practice

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

- the effectiveness of the peer observation of teaching (paragraph 2.6)
- the highly responsive approach to matters raised by students (paragraph 2.7)
- the effective academic and pastoral support available to students (paragraph 2.10).

### Recommendations

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

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

- continue to develop and implement planned arrangements to enhance oversight and enable more effective monitoring of the provision (paragraph 1.10)
- implement proposed plans to share meaningful module-specific feedback with students (paragraph 2.17)
- enhance procedures for the routine review of public information (paragraph 3.5).

## About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)<sup>1</sup> (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at Amity London Business School (the provider; the School). 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 Anglia Ruskin University. The review was carried out by Mr Stephen Harris, Mr Simeon London, Mrs Trudy Stiles (reviewers), and Ms Ann-Marie Colbert (coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the [Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook](#).<sup>2</sup> Evidence in support of the review included documentation supplied by the provider and Anglia Ruskin University, report provided by the Accreditation Service for International Colleges, and meetings with staff and students.

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

- the Academic Infrastructure
- the regulations of its awarding body.

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

Amity London Business School (the School) is part of the Ritnand Balved Education Foundation, a global higher education group. The School was established in June 2009 under the original name of Amity Global Business School London. At inception, the School achieved approval for the franchised delivery of three existing Anglia Ruskin University pathways. Administrative and student support facilities are located in the School's Bedford Square premises in central London. Students are integrated into university life at Birkbeck, University of London for their studies. A total of 184 students are enrolled at the School on Anglia Ruskin University awards, of which 151 are international students. There are 47 full-time students on the undergraduate pathway and 137 full-time students on the postgraduate pathways. No students study part-time.

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

### **Anglia Ruskin University**

- BA (Hons) Business Management (47)
- MSc Management (119)
- MBA (18)

## The provider's stated responsibilities

Responsibility for programme delivery is shared between the School and Anglia Ruskin University (the University). The School has responsibility for delivery of each programme and shares responsibility for the academic standards and quality with the University. The School has responsibility for recruitment.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/tier-4](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/tier-4).

<sup>2</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx).

## **Recent developments**

The School's Bedford Square building has recently been refurbished and the number of administrative staff has recently increased. Curriculum management and the maintenance of academic standards and quality are now supported by a UK Border Agency Compliance Officer, a Financial Officer and two experienced administrators in addition to the experienced academic staff.

## **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 produced a written submission with the guidance and support of the School, which proved useful to the review team. Student representatives were unavailable to meet the coordinator at the preparatory meeting. However, a productive meeting between students and the team took place during the review visit.

## Detailed findings about Amity London Business School

### 1 Academic standards

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

1.1 Arrangements for the management of academic standards are clearly identified in the agreement between the School and the University, which govern the franchised provision. Key responsibilities delegated to the School include student admissions, first marking and the provision of assessment feedback to students. Moderation and second marking are shared responsibilities, as are the monitoring of retention and completion.

1.2 Reporting arrangements and delegation of responsibilities provide an appropriate basis for the management of academic standards. The School's new academic governance structure is clear. Responsibilities are delegated from the appropriate faculty boards of the University to the School's Academic Board and Academic Development Committee, both of which are advised by the Amity Europe Foundation Strategic Advisory Board. Reporting takes place through the School Executive Team, Quality Review and Assurance Committee, Teaching and Learning Committee, Curriculum Management Committee, and Disciplinary Committee. Governance resides with the Academic Board and the School Executive Team. Oversight of pathways is maintained by the Principal and Director, who works directly with teams to administer the provision. The Principal and Director is a member of the School Executive Team and reports directly to the Academic Board. These arrangements are suitable for a school of this size and give regular insight into the delivery and quality of pathways in accordance with the School's Policy for Quality Assurance of Collaborative Provision. The structure is understood by academic and administrative staff who participate in regular, well documented committee meetings, which demonstrate appropriate management of academic standards.

1.3 Working relationships between the School and the University are productive and effective in assuring oversight of education. University faculty boards oversee curriculum delivery, monitoring and review, and the operation of the assessment process. The University-appointed Link Tutor provides the School with valuable support for academic and administrative matters. The review team found this active relationship works well for both parties. Module tutors also meet regularly with the University's module leaders in standardisation meetings, second marking meetings and board meetings each semester.

1.4 Coherent oversight of academic standards is maintained through close integration of the School's delivery with the curriculum management structure of the University. The School is supported in its management of academic standards and application of university policies and procedures by close relationships with the University.

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

1.5 The School takes account of the Academic Infrastructure in developing its internal quality assurance processes, in particular the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code of practice*).

1.6 The School's management and delivery of franchised provision is consistent with advice in the *Code of practice, Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)* and appropriate to levels, as described in *The framework for*

*higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ).*

Staff engage indirectly with subject benchmark statements through delivery of the provision clearly described in the pathway documents produced by the University.

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

1.7 Moderation procedures are efficient and effective. Assessments set by the University are marked by School staff and subject to internal moderation by the School prior to moderation at the University. The School applies the approach to moderation specified in the University's Senate Codes of Practice on Assessment and External Examining. The staff's wholehearted engagement with the moderation and second marking procedure facilitates effective sharing of good practice. Regular contact between School staff and University module leaders enables marking standards to be set and maintained at an appropriate level.

1.8 The University's external examiners report upon the provision of specific subjects across all partner schools and colleges. This results in there being little specific mention of this particular School. External examiners' recommendations for enhancement are implemented at all collaborative partner delivery points, including the School. As part of its new internal framework for the management of academic standards, the School has recently appointed its own external examiner to moderate marks prior to submission to the formal University moderation process.

1.9 The School puts the University's annual monitoring process to appropriate use in evaluating its implementation of moderation and examining. Annual reviews produced by the School in accordance with the established frameworks of the University provide an appropriate overview. Plans arising from annual review clearly identify key points for improvement, although the associated actions and completion tracking are less clearly defined by the School.

1.10 To enhance oversight, the School has recently developed its own internal framework. Elements of the new framework yet to be implemented include Annual Academic Review and Internal Subject Review, which will expand opportunities to review provision. It is desirable for the School to continue to develop and implement its own internal framework to support its management of academic standards and facilitate more effective monitoring.

1.11 Appropriate systems and processes are in place for sharing good practice. School staff and the Link Tutor identify and promote the exchange of good practice in learning and teaching. The Link Tutor also provides staff development for the School's academic staff and facilitates the sharing of good practice from the University to the School. Staff particularly value the opportunities for sharing good practice presented by the regular standardisation meetings, second marking meetings and board meetings with the University.

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

## 2 Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1 The School has delegated responsibility for student admissions and induction, academic guidance, review and monitoring. Responsibility is shared for collecting and acting on student feedback, developing staff, monitoring the quality of higher education teaching and learning, provision of learning resources, and programme and module information available to students.

2.2 The management structure detailed in paragraphs 1.2 and 1.3 similarly supports the delivery of learning opportunities.

### **How effectively are external reference points used in the management and enhancement of learning opportunities?**

2.3 The use of external reference points is largely as described in paragraphs 1.5 and 1.6. In particular, the School meets the expectations of the *Code of practice, Section 1: Postgraduate research programmes* by the appointment of appropriately qualified and experienced staff and by preparing the students from the start of their undergraduate programme through the compulsory Research Skills module. Benchmarking is achieved through the standardisation meetings with the University and other providers. Useful comparisons are also made by the part-time staff who deliver similar material in other institutions.

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

2.4 The School's explicit Teaching and Learning Strategy and Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy underpin the School's Human Resource Strategy. These provide an appropriate framework for core staff development and continuous improvement in curriculum management and delivery. Academic support systems minimise the administrative burden on academic staff, thereby enabling resources to be concentrated on teaching and research. The Teaching and Learning Committee meets once each semester to promote effective teaching and learning methods, monitor the peer review process and review the impact of assessment on the student learning experience.

2.5 The Human Resources Strategy for staff development is clear and underpinned by a range of appropriate policies. Academic staff have extensive educational and professional experience in business and finance, and many are currently research active. A range of performance and development policies are applied to provide a supportive environment for staff, which is further enhanced by the sharing of observed good practice.

2.6 Staff are enthusiastic about the benefits of peer observation of teaching and use this productively to support their development and share good practice. All participate fully in this developmental process designed to enhance teaching quality by encouraging reflection on practice and the provision of formative and constructive feedback. Staff confirmed the benefits for their teaching practice of both observing and being observed in this flexible process that is arranged through mutual agreement. The effectiveness of the peer observation process is enhanced by the positive engagement of staff and constitutes good practice. New members of staff are routinely observed by the Principal and Director, outside of the peer observation process, as required in the Teaching and Learning Strategy.

2.7 Students are fully involved in evaluating teaching and learning in accordance with the expectation of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy. Student feedback on teaching and learning is obtained in an appropriate variety of ways. These include internal surveys of student opinion each semester administered by the Student Support Services and annual module and pathway questionnaires. Feedback is also obtained formally through student representatives and Student Committee, and informally during regular contact between staff and students. All students met by the team confirmed that their views are listened to and their concerns promptly acted upon. Information is used to guide enhancement activities, such as the provision of additional tuition. Feedback about how their views have influenced provision is given to students through the Student Committee and student representatives. Module questionnaires, with actions taken, are returned to the following cohort. The highly responsive approach to matters raised by students, which generates a positive and supportive environment and enhances their learning opportunities, is good practice.

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

2.8 A comprehensive range of School policies, strategies and procedures inform and guide staff and students, as they fulfil their responsibilities. The Quality Manual covers student recruitment, induction and the various aspects of support and guidance, and directs staff to relevant policies and procedures. Students speak positively of the value of the information they receive and the academic and pastoral support available.

2.9 An effective student life-cycle approach to personal and academic student support begins with pre-entry advice and guidance. During induction students receive informative presentations from the Principal and Director, student members of the Student Committee, welfare services and pathway staff.

2.10 Students value the available support arrangements and consider these to be highly responsive to their requests. A high level of access to tutors, academic and administrative staff is confirmed by students. Each student and their personal tutor meet for pastoral support at least once each semester to focus on individual needs. Other formal and informal meetings are arranged as required and time is also made available at the end of classes. A Student Academic Advisor is in place, as required by the University. Academic support is principally from the tutor for each module, but is also provided by other members of staff and the Principal and Director. The effective and accessible academic and pastoral support provided by module tutors, personal tutors and academic coordinators is good practice. All student profiles are monitored each semester using the University review process. The School plans to mirror this process.

2.11 Students value the modules that increase their writing and research skills. Following the School's identification of some low retention and achievement rates in the BA (Hons) Business and Management pathway in 2010-11, skills provision has been increased and close links are made between lesson content and summative assessment. Student assessment progress is now more carefully monitored. The teaching, learning and assessment approaches now provide more opportunities for formative feedback. Students are positive about the formative support they receive. The team found that written formative feedback to students varies from excellent for some dissertation assessment to adequate for some undergraduate modules. Students confirm that feedback is timely and constructive. Written feedback is often provided electronically within a few days and assessment scripts seen later. The School recognises that academic problems are frequently related to personal issues and is currently improving the format of its retention and achievement data to enhance the provided information.



### **What are the provider's arrangements for staff development to maintain and/or enhance the quality of learning opportunities?**

2.12 Extensive experience in higher education and excellent qualifications are offered by most staff. The team found an impressive record of research, scholarship and published works. Those who are new to teaching value the careful mentoring provided by senior tutors. Senior tutors are experienced academic members of staff with responsibility for the operation of student support, development of the personal tutoring system and the provision of advice and guidance for personal tutors.

2.13 Committees and individual staff have clearly defined responsibilities for identifying staff development needs. Both appraisal and peer observation processes provide appropriate mechanisms for the identification and implementation of development needs. Research, attendance at conferences and the acquisition of teaching qualifications are actively encouraged and supported. Training is provided by both the University and the School for academic and administrative staff. This has included the Academic Infrastructure, setting and measuring standards in assessment and matching learning outcomes to assessment. Training in student support and specialist resources is also provided.

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

2.14 A strategic agreement facilitates students' integration into university life at Birkbeck, University of London. This includes the provision of learning resources. Students also have access to the University of London Senate House Library. These facilities have been commended by the University and Accreditation Service for International Colleges and are well regarded by students.

2.15 Students value their access to the extensive learning materials available on the University's online digital library and virtual learning environment. Although students voiced concerns about access to the University's virtual learning environment in their written submission, those met by the team confirmed that any problems were promptly resolved.

2.16 Flexible access to pathway and module guides, learning materials and School policies and procedures is provided for both staff and students through the School's own virtual learning environment. Although currently limited in use, the School's e-learning strategy indicates a solid commitment to the development of the virtual learning environment as a mechanism for enhancing student-learning opportunities. A supporting action plan provides some indication of the School's route map for development, but only a limited view of how these aims are to be achieved. Refinement of this action plan to offer more clearly defined and achievable objectives would support the School in fulfilling its e-learning strategy.

2.17 The School independently undertakes timely module evaluations across all pathways every semester, as well as obtaining pathway feedback through the University. Data is shared with the Principal and Director, Programme Leader and Module Tutor for reflection and analysis. Action plans are produced for each pathway and module. Statistics are also published for students on the virtual learning environment. However, the module evaluation currently available to students is aggregated for all modules across all pathways within each year. This inhibits conclusions being drawn about specific module performance. It is desirable that disaggregated module specific feedback is published to permit explicit module performance to be clearly shared.

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 Public information

#### **How effectively does the provider's public information communicate to students and other stakeholders about the higher education it provides?**

3.1 The School is responsible for the publication of the prospectus, website and pre-arrival information issued to students. Responsibility for the publication of programme and module information is shared with the University.

3.2 The main channels for publishing pre-enrolment information are through the School's prospectus and website. The School's new website provides extensive information relating to courses, facilities and study for potential students and other stakeholders, which is accessible and relevant. It also provides access to timetables and the School's virtual learning environment, thereby extending communication and accessibility for current students.

3.3 The Student Pre-Arrival Guide provides comprehensive advice that students find helpful. Further helpful course information is provided to students during induction. A range of supporting documents designed to orient students to their studies supplement the University's course handbooks. These are provided in hard copy and electronically through the School's virtual learning environment.

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

3.4 Appropriate policies detail the mechanisms for ensuring public information is suitably scrutinised and approved through all formats, including social media. Key areas of responsibility are attributed to appropriate staff. Significant changes to the website and prospectus undergo a three-stage approval process, which is signed off by the appropriate member of staff. Identified staff share collective responsibility and final oversight authorisation resides with the Principal and Director.

3.5 Scrutiny brought to the process of ensuring that published information is correct has recently been enhanced. The recent introduction of the roles of UK Border Agency Compliance Officer, Information Coordinator and Web Account Manager support publication in line with current legislation and university policy. Responsibilities for ensuring the accuracy of public information are evident in policy documentation. However, the titles of those with role-specific responsibilities are at times inconsistent. The responsibilities of newly recruited staff are not made explicit in the policy documentation governing the scrutiny and publication of public information. It is desirable that the School enhances its procedures for the routine review of published documentation to ensure that currency and accuracy is maintained. This includes associated policies and procedures.

3.6 Comprehensive course handbooks published by the University are supplemented by student information handbooks published by the School. These handbooks provide a clear overview of the modules within each study pathway, as well as orienting the student to the University's policies and procedures governing delivery within the School's own administrative and academic structure. Guidance notes are provided for the production of

the student information handbooks. However, information about teaching staff, their roles and contact details are not provided within the published handbooks. The currency, accuracy and appropriateness of teaching and learning materials in the School's virtual learning environment are primarily the responsibility of the module tutors. Monitoring of materials published is undertaken by the Compliance Officer/Information Coordinator.

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

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

Amity London Business School action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight September 2012						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The review team identified the following areas of <b>good practice</b> that are worthy of wider dissemination within the provider:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the effectiveness of the peer observation of teaching (paragraph 2.6)</li> </ul>	Expand Peer Observation practice to include reflection on student feedback about modules	December 2013	Academic Unit Teaching and Learning Committee	Increased satisfaction from students on the module evaluation forms	Senior Executive Team	End-of-year joint meeting of academic staff and Senior Executive Team
			Student Support Unit  Academic Unit	Identified areas of improvement that need to be addressed through staff personal development  Maintain staff teaching and learning methods up to date		Annual peer observation report  Annual student survey report  Away day  Staff appraisal
	Development of an annual peer	December 2013	Chair of Teaching and	Teaching and learning methods	School Executive Team	Teaching and Learning

<sup>3</sup> The provider 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 provider's awarding body.

	observation report regarding the efficiency and usability of peer observations process in identifying good practices and areas for personal improvement		Learning Committee	that work efficiently across the programmes to be identified  Identification and selection of the good practices that can be shared within the School		Committee minutes  School Executive Team minutes  Away day  Staff appraisal  Staff feedback on peer observation of teaching and proposal for areas of improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the highly responsive approach to matters raised by students (paragraph 2.7)</li> </ul>	Respond to all queries and questions by students quickly and effectively by email, personal meetings and Amity virtual learning environment	June 2013  December 2013	School Executive Team  Academic Director  Head of Student Support	Student feedback shows positive response to questions regarding student voice  Maintain student complaints number at zero  Respond to all students queries within one week	Principal	School Executive Team minutes  Curriculum Management Committee minutes
	Log and monitor the progress of each matter raised by students report each semester to include	June 2013  December 2013	Head of Student Support  Academic Unit	Proven efficiency of student enquiries process		

	analysis and evaluation of the efficiency of the process					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the effective academic and pastoral support available to students (paragraph 2.10).</li> </ul>	Publish pre-arrival advice on the website	January 2013	Academic Unit Student Support  Admission Committee	Testimonials from past and current students  Student number that received academic support in the current academic year	Senior Executive Team	Admission Committee minutes  School Executive Team minutes
	Ask for students' feedback on the website to improve reader experience	February 2013	Student Support Unit  Student Committee	Positive student survey feedback	Senior Executive Team	Student Committee minutes
<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Action to be taken</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Action by</b>	<b>Success indicators</b>	<b>Reported to</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
The team considers that it is <b>desirable</b> for the provider to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>continue to develop and implement planned arrangements to enhance oversight and enable more effective monitoring of the provision (paragraph 1.10)</li> </ul>	Implement the Subject Review Process as part of the School 'Internal Framework for Maintaining and Enhancement of Academic Standards and Quality'	December 2013	Principal  Academic Director Quality Review and Assurance Committee	Identification of areas of improvement for the business subject related programmes  Positive feedback within the Quality Review and Assurance audit	Amity Europe Strategic Advisory Board  School Executive Team	Annual academic report, subject review report and minutes from governance committees

	Review and update as required all policies and procedures on a regular basis (once per academic year)	December 2013	Quality Review and Assurance Committee	report Identification of areas of improvement based on the use of the policy in the current academic year  Maintaining the academic quality standard, through the use of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education as point of reference	School Executive Team	Annual Quality Review and Assurance Committee Report  Regular evaluation of Highly Trusted Sponsor Status; indicators (monthly)
	Review the UK Border Agency policies on regular basis and update and improve the School's policies and procedures accordingly	July 2013	Quality Review and Assurance Committee  Admission Committee  UK Border Agency Compliance Unit	Maintaining Highly Trusted Sponsor Status  Maintaining the Highly Trusted Sponsor Status; indicators  Decrease in the rate of visa refusal	School Executive Team	Evaluation of the number of Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies accepted (monthly)  Quality Review and Assurance Committee minutes  Admission Committee minutes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>implement proposed plans to share meaningful module-specific feedback with students (paragraph 2.17)</li> </ul>	Publish student feedback related to module/programmes in the Amity virtual learning environment	December 2012	Academic Director Head of Student Support	Availability of data published for students via virtual learning environment	School Executive Team	Curriculum Management Committee minutes
	Analysis of all student feedback related to all modules and programmes	June 2013	Academic Unit Student Support Unit	Availability of data statistics related to each aspect of the student life	School Executive Team	School Executive Team minutes
	Analysis of all student survey feedback related to all other aspects of student life at Amity and integration into an annual student feedback report	December 2013	Student Committee			Student Committee minutes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>enhance procedures for the routine review of public information (paragraph 3.5).</li> </ul>	Review, revise and update the public information approval cycle	February 2013	Marketing Advice Committee Quality Review and Assurance Committee	Currency of our policies based on internal and external sector changes	Principal School Executive Team	
	Review, revise and update the marketing policies and procedures	March 2013	Marketing Advice Committee	Clear defined procedures to reflect the currency of the policies		
	Implement the revised policies and procedures	June 2013	Quality Review and Assurance Committee			



## 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 Educational Oversight can be found at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/types-of-review/tier-4](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/types-of-review/tier-4).

## 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: Handbook](#)<sup>4</sup>

**Academic Infrastructure** Guidance developed and agreed by the higher education community and published by QAA, which is used by institutions to ensure that their courses meet national expectations for academic standards and that students have access to a suitable environment for learning (academic quality). It consists of four groups of reference points: the **frameworks for higher education qualifications**, the **subject benchmark statements**, the **programme specifications** and the **Code of practice**. Work is underway (2011-12) to revise the Academic Infrastructure as the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

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

**academic standards** The standards set and maintained by institutions for their courses and expected for their awards. See also **threshold academic standard**.

**awarding body** A body with the authority to award academic qualifications located on the **framework for higher education qualifications**, such as diplomas or degrees.

**awarding organisation** An organisation with the authority to award academic qualifications located on the Qualifications and Credit Framework for England and Northern Ireland (these qualifications are at levels 1 to 8, with levels 4 and above being classed as 'higher education').

**Code of practice** *The Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education*, published by QAA: a set of interrelated documents giving guidance for higher education institutions.

**designated body** An organisation that has been formally appointed to perform a particular function.

**differentiated judgements** In a Review for Educational Oversight, separate judgements respectively for the provision validated by separate awarding bodies.

**enhancement** Taking deliberate steps at institutional level to improve the quality of **learning opportunities**. It is used as a technical term in QAA's audit and review processes.

**feature of good practice** A positive aspect of the way a higher education institution manages quality and standards, which may be seen as exemplary to others.

**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:

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<sup>4</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx).

*The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ) and The framework for qualifications of higher education institutions in Scotland.*

**highly trusted sponsor** An education provider that the UK government trusts to admit migrant students from overseas, according to Tier 4 of the UK Border Agency's points-based immigration system. Higher education providers wishing to obtain this status must undergo a successful review by QAA.

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

**learning outcome** 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 reports.

**programme (of study)** An approved course of study which 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** An institution that offers courses of higher education, typically on behalf of a separate **awarding body or organisation**. In the context of REO, 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').

**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.

**quality** See **academic 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 standard** The minimum standard that a student should reach in order to gain a particular qualification or award, as set out in the **subject benchmark statements** and national qualifications frameworks. Threshold standards are distinct from the standards of performance that students need to achieve in order to gain any particular class of award, for example a first-class bachelor's degree. See also **academic standard**.

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

RG 1055 12/12

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