Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges) of Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd (Study Group)

University of Huddersfield International Study Centre

October 2016

Contents

About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at the University of Huddersfield International Study Centre. The review took place from 27 to 28 October 2016 and was conducted by a team of two reviewers, as follows:

- Dr Sylvia Hargreaves
- Dr David Houlston.

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

In Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges) the QAA review team:

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

In Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges) there is also a check on the provider's financial sustainability, management and governance (FSMG). This check has the aim of giving students reasonable confidence that they should not be at risk of being unable to complete their course as a result of financial failure of their education provider.

A summary of the findings can be found in the section starting on page 2. Explanations of the findings are given in numbered paragraphs in the section starting on page 6.

In reviewing the University of Huddersfield International Study Centre the review team has also considered a theme selected for particular focus across higher education in England and Northern Ireland. The themes for the academic year 2014-15 are Digital Literacies and Student Employability,[2] and the provider is required to select, in consultation with student representatives, one of these themes to be explored through the review process.

The QAA website gives more information about QAA and its mission.[3] A dedicated section explains the method for Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges).[4] For an explanation of terms see the glossary at the end of this report.

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[1] The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at: www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code.
[2] Higher Education Review themes: www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=106.
[3] QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us.
[4] Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers): www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/Educational-Oversight-.aspx.

Key findings

QAA's judgements about the University of Huddersfield International Study Centre

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at the University of Huddersfield International Study Centre.

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

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following features of **good practice** at the University of Huddersfield International Study Centre:

- the close relationship with the University and the integrated approach to securing academic standards and the quality of students' learning opportunities (Expectation A2.1)
- the establishment of the role of the Head of International Projects as a joint appointment between the Centre and the University to support effective recruitment and marketing (Expectations B2, C)
- the comprehensive training and written guidance provided for personal tutors that support their role (Expectation B4).

Affirmation of action being taken

The QAA review team **affirms** the following action that the University of Huddersfield International Study Centre is already taking to make academic standards secure and improve the educational provision offered to its students:

- the steps being taken to minimise academic misconduct in assessment (Expectation B6).

Enhancement of student learning opportunities

The University of Huddersfield International Study Centre (UHISC) affirms a commitment to the continuing improvement of students' learning opportunities within a culture of enhancement. The approach is strategic and informed by its close relationship with the University. The formalisation of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Group in 2015-16, as distinct from the joint University/UHISC course committee, has completed UHISC's integration into the Study Group governance structure. UHISC takes deliberate steps to use evidence to support enhancement. It also engages students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience. Overall, the evidence shows that UHISC listens to the student voice and uses it to identify and act upon opportunities for further enhancement (see Expectation B5).

Theme: Student Employability

UHISC has embarked on a staged process for enhancing student engagement with employability skills within the Foundation Year and International Year programmes. Employability skills are embedded within the curriculum of these programmes. The integration of vocational and interpersonal skills into the Business, Engineering and Art foundation as well as the International Year One programmes has been achieved through the mapping the skills set against UHISC'S existing International Foundation Year and International Year One programmes. These modules are linked in to the University's *MyCareer* employability scheme and the Study Group's implementation of its *CareerAhead* programme across centres. Support for this development planning is provided by UHISC tutors and the University's Careers Advice Services team. The final stage is for UHISC students to progress onto university degree programmes that support various work-based learning opportunities (for example, sandwich courses).

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

About the University of Huddersfield International Study Centre

UHISC was established in 2008. In 2013, to accommodate a significantly expanding student population and staff teams, UHISC was brought under one roof in newly refurbished facilities. The provision includes teaching and seminar rooms, staff rooms, a student common room and an IT suite opened in summer 2015. The ISC also employs rooms elsewhere on campus for teaching and exam purposes as well as laboratory facilities.

The most recent Collaborative Agreement between Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd and the University of Huddersfield was signed in April 2013 (UHISC001) and programme-specific Contracts of Collaboration (for each award) were updated and signed in November 2013. The Agreement stipulates that all programmes of study are to be validated by the University of Huddersfield, which is ultimately responsible for the maintenance of academic standards of those programmes. All validated programmes went through a full re-development prior to the revalidation event during the 2013-14 academic year.

Since UHISC's opening, student numbers have been on a steady increase with a significant rise for the 2014-15 academic year of 72 per cent from the previous year. The 2015-16 academic year has seen a decline in numbers for the first time by 24 per cent on the previous year.

UHISC provides pathway provision at three levels: Foundation (Level 3), International Year One (Level 4), and Pre-Masters (Level 6). Programmes are offered in three main subject areas including Business, Engineering and Art, all of which are supported by Academic English modules. The current portfolio of programmes is as follows: International Foundation Years (IFY) in Business, Law and Social Studies, Engineering, Computing and Science (IFYECS) and Creative Arts (IFYArt). There are two International Year One (IY1) programmes in Business, Management and Marketing (IYOBus) and in Engineering (IYOEng). There are two Pre-Masters programmes in Business (PMPBus) and in Art (PMPArt). There are three English programmes: English for Pre-Masters (EPM), English Language Preparation (ELP) and English Skills for University Study (ESUS). In 2015-16 there were 287 students.

A new Head of Centre was appointed in January 2015 before the last QAA Review in May 2015. After a successful outcome from that review, the Centre has now solidified its

management and administration (professional services) teams, continuing to work to build efficiency into its day-to-day operations. A new e-Champion has been appointed to help train and assist the Centre with its IT needs, both with administrative functions and in teaching and learning. A new 0.5 lecturer in Law has been appointed to add to the legal expertise in the Business team. UHISC now has a Safeguarding and Wellbeing Lead responsible for ensuring all students are living and studying in a safe environment and also that any students with additional needs are supported properly.

The major challenge facing UHISC is to increase student numbers for PMP Business and Art.

UHISC has successfully addressed the outcomes of the review in 2015. These are clearly recorded in the Centre Action Plan. There were two features of good practice: one regarding the collection and analysis of student progression data, and another for the support for students in transferring to university. There was one advisable recommendation regarding formalising governance which has been achieved. The three desirable recommendations relating to making reference to national qualifications in documentation, making more use of the Quality Code and engaging students more in decision making have all been achieved.

Explanation of the findings about the University of Huddersfield International Study Centre

This section explains the review findings in more detail.

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

1   Judgement: The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of the provider

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Findings

1.1   The University of Huddersfield (the University) has ultimate responsibility for the academic standards of the programmes covered by this review: the International Foundation Year (at Level 3), the International Year One (at Level 4) and the Pre-Masters programme (PMP) (at Level 6). All these programmes are validated by the University and subject to the University's quality assurance processes.

1.2   The University's validation and revalidation processes draw on a range of documentation, including programme and module specifications. The UHISC Centre Handbook elucidates the nature and purpose of programme specifications: to explain the aims and intended learning outcomes of a programme, demonstrate which reference points have been used to inform programme design and show how the programme team engaged with the FHEQ, UKQC and Subject Benchmark Statements.

1.3   The University external examiner template, which is used by UHISC for the Level 6 PMP pathways (see Expectation B7), asks external examiners to confirm that the academic standards set are appropriate for qualifications at the relevant level and comparable with similar programmes in other UK institutions.

1.4   These arrangements allow the Expectation to be met.

1.5 To test whether the Expectation is met, the review team examined the effectiveness of the practices and procedures by reviewing contractual, validation/revalidation and other documentation including process and guidance documents, the Centre Handbook, programme and module specifications, and external examiner reports. The review team also held meetings with current students and former students who have progressed to the University, teaching and administrative staff, senior staff and University representatives.

1.6 In designing the programmes, UHISC staff consulted University schools. Programme documentation and staff comment to the review team confirm that design processes ensured that the programmes are positioned at the appropriate levels, align with relevant external reference points and provide a good articulation with the relevant University degree programmes. Programme specifications, which are completed in the University template, reference relevant Subject Benchmark Statements, assign credit values that align with relevant national frameworks and set out positively defined learning outcomes. Module specifications, also in the University template, specify relevant FHEQ/RQF levels.

1.7 As external examiners have been (up to the 2015-16 academic year) appointed for the Level 6 provision only, their comments are confined at present to a very small cohort of students. The available external examiner reports confirm that the academic standards set are appropriate for qualifications at the relevant level and comparable with similar programmes in other UK institutions.

1.8 Relevant external reference points are used to secure, and ensure consistency in, academic standards. The review team concluded that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.9   The University has overall responsibility for the academic standards as the validating partner for UHISC programmes and awards. The regulatory framework for UHISC's academic awards is defined in the collaborative partnership agreement. This framework is supplemented by corporate policies and procedures in the BES Academic Quality Handbook, which promote parity of standards across the network of Study Group centres and are largely consistent with the University expectations.

1.10   These arrangements allow the Expectation to be met.

1.11   To test whether the Expectation is met, the review team scrutinised QAEG minutes, the Centre Review Report, RQAEG minutes and met senior, teaching and support staff and students.

1.12   In accordance with the decentralised Study Group academic management structure, the UHISC operates its own Quality Assurance and Enhancement Group (QAEG). The introduction of this QAEG in 2015 separated oversight of academic standards from more routine programme management activities and enabled a more specific focus on reviewing and monitoring the Centre Action Plan (CAP).

1.13   The QAEG submits a standardised report to the Regional Quality Assurance & Enhancement Group (RQAEG), which is chaired by the Regional Director and promotes comparability of academic standards across the BES regional centres.

1.14   A Course Committee provides an interface between UHISC's QAEG and the University governance structure. This Course Committee membership includes University representatives and provides a direct link to the University's Business School, which has responsibility for corporate oversight of academic standards in the Centre's validated programmes.

1.15   In discussion with senior staff, the review team confirmed UHISC is treated as a department within the Business School for the purpose of managing and monitoring the governance of academic provision. Evidence of the Centre's status within the Business School was provided in the University's recent internal subject review of English Studies, which incorporated the ISC's English language programmes.

1.16   The link between the University's Business School and UHISC is promoted through the role of a Designated Academic Liaison Officer (DALO). The DALO combines with Academic Link Tutors from University Schools to support and enhance academic provision in the Centre and the progression of its students onto University programmes. The DALO is a member of the Course Committee and Course Assessment Board, which are chaired by the Head of Centre.

1.17   In discussion with senior managers and University representatives, the review team was informed of the recent appointment of a co-funded Head of International Projects Manager to coordinate and promote recruitment and marketing of UHISC provision in

cooperation with the University's International Office. In combination with the DALO and Link Tutors, the review team considered this joint appointment further demonstrated the closeness of UHISC's relationship with the Business School and University, and was evidence of **good practice** that secured the academic standards and quality of learning opportunities for students.

1.18   The organisation and regulation of academic provision with the UHISC are defined and monitored through the University's programme validation and review procedures. The University's Standing Committee on Collaborative Provision (SCCP) ensures UHISC adheres to the external academic infrastructure.

1.19   Following discussion with academic, senior management and University staff, and through a review of documentation, the review team considered the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk level is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.20   Through the validation and periodic review procedures required by the University, the UHISC provision is mapped against the National Qualification Framework (NQF), the Quality Code and relevant Subject Benchmark Statements. A Centre Handbook provides information on the governance, management and monitoring of academic programmes.

1.21   Through a review of documentary evidence, the review team confirms that University templates are used as the basis for definitive framework documents such as the Programme Specifications and Module Guides.

1.22   These arrangements allow the Expectation to be met.

1.23   To test whether the Expectation is met, the review team scrutinised programme and module guides, the Centre Handbook, the responsibilities check list, minutes of PAVC, SAVP and the ECREO Report May 2015. It also met senior, teaching and support staff and students.

1.24   Programme specifications, which are completed in the University template, reference relevant Subject Benchmark Statements, assign credit values that align with relevant national frameworks and set out positively defined learning outcomes. Module specifications, also in the University template, specify relevant FHEQ/RQF levels. Following a desirable recommendation from the previous ECREO report in May 2015, marginal reference to the national qualifications frameworks was provided in a re-development document and reinforced in a meeting with senior managers.

1.25   Modifications to programmes are the shared responsibility of the University and Study Group, and administered through the Study Group's Programme Approval & Validation Committee (PAVC) and the Business School's Accreditation & Validation Panel (SAVP).

1.26   The review team is able to confirm that a definitive record of each programme and qualification had been maintained and formed the basis for teaching, learning and assessment activities. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.27   The International Foundation Year (IFY), the International Year One (IY1) and the Pre-Masters programme (PMP), designed by UHISC, are validated by the University and carry University credit. The programmes were revalidated in 2013. The University has ultimate responsibility for academic standards. The Centre Handbook provides guidance on the quality assurance and enhancement procedures adopted by UHISC and Study Group, with respect to the validation, revalidation and annual evaluation of programmes, designed to align with the UKQC, meet University requirements and comply with Study Group's policies and processes.

1.28   The University's validation/revalidation process draws on a range of documentation including a self-evaluation document prepared by the programme team, and, with respect in particular to academic standards, programme and module specifications completed in the University's templates, annual evaluation reports and external examiner reports. The process is conducted by a panel including appropriate external membership.

1.29   The Centre Handbook elucidates the nature and purpose of programme specifications: to explain the aims and intended learning outcomes of a programme, demonstrate which reference points have been used to inform programme design and show how the programme team engaged with the FHEQ, UKQC and Subject Benchmark Statements.

1.30   The arrangements in place to ensure that academic standards are set at the appropriate level allow the Expectation to be met.

1.31   To test whether the Expectation is met, the review team examined the effectiveness of the practices and procedures by reviewing contractual, procedural, validation, revalidation and other documentation including external examiner reports and programme and module specifications. The team also held meetings with current students and former students who have progressed to the University, teaching and administrative staff, senior staff and University representatives.

1.32   The review team had available a range of documentation relating to the validation of the Pre-Masters and International Year 1 (Engineering) programmes in 2011 and the design and revalidation of the entire suite of University-validated UHISC programmes in 2013.

1.33   Programme design was undertaken by UHISC staff in consultation with students and University schools. UHISC's revalidation submission, which sets out the rationale for the programmes, confirms that programme specifications were written to appropriate levels. While programme specifications do not directly reference national qualifications frameworks, current module specifications specify relevant FHEQ/RQF levels.

1.34   Together with the programme specifications, and staff comment to the review team at the visit, the revalidation submission evidences the work undertaken by the programme team, in consultation with the relevant University schools, in designing the programmes to

ensure that standards were set at the appropriate level; that the programmes provide a good articulation with the relevant University degree programmes; and that credit values align with national frameworks.

1.35   The University validation and revalidation panels were chaired by senior University staff on behalf of the University Learning and Teaching Committee and included appropriate external members. The panels examined and discussed with the programme teams a range of documentation including module and programme specifications, with learning outcomes mapped to Subject Benchmark Statements and module specifications, allowing them to be satisfied that academic standards were set at levels meeting relevant UK threshold standards and their own academic frameworks and regulations.

1.36   In 2016-17, the UHISC programmes will continue to deliver English teaching through ESUS, which has been replaced by Academic English Skills (AES) across most of the ISC network. Senior staff and University representatives indicated that UHISC and the University see the introduction of AES as a very positive development. Its incorporation into the UHISC programmes has been put back to 2017-18 to allow full University approval processes to be completed. The review team heard that, for the current academic year, UHISC will receive continued Study Group support for ESUS delivery.

1.37   Programme validation and revalidation processes ensure that academic standards are set at the appropriate level. The team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

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

Findings

1.38   Programme specification documents identify the intended learning outcomes for each programme of study, how modules are combined to form coherent programmes of study, and the alignment of the programme within the FHEQ. These programme specifications and module handbooks are made available to students via the University's virtual learning environment (VLE-Unilearn) Module handbooks contain information on indicative learning outcomes, assessment requirements and procedures, curriculum organisation, learning activities and a scheme of work. Assessment regulations are consistent with the procedures and expectations of the University.

1.39   These arrangements allow the Expectation to be met.

1.40   To test this Expectation the review team scrutinised the VLE, module handbooks, assessment regulations, programme specifications, and the Course Assessment Board minutes and met with senior, teaching and support staff and students.

1.41   For PMP, on completion of a module, student attainment is considered by external examiners and reported to a Course Assessment Board (CAB), which is chaired by the Head of Centre and attended by UHISC academic staff and University Link Tutors. Review of documentation confirmed to the review team this external and independent oversight verified the expected standard of attainment had been demonstrated through assessment.

1.42   Student representatives understood the association between module learning outcomes and assessment requirements, and knew where to locate the relevant documentary guidelines.

1.43   As a consequence of documentary review and meeting with students, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.44   Under the contractual arrangements with the University, UHISC is subject to the University's annual course evaluation, subject review, collaborative mid-term review and revalidation processes. UHISC must also comply with Study Group's monitoring and review processes, comprising ongoing programme monitoring through the Centre Action Plan (CAP), annual monitoring and Centre Review. The Centre Handbook provides guidance on the quality assurance and enhancement procedures adopted by UHISC and Study Group, with respect to the validation, revalidation and annual evaluation of programmes, designed to align with the UKQC, meet University requirements and comply with Study Group's policies and processes.

1.45   As prescribed by the Centre handbook, the module and programme-level annual evaluation process requires review of and reflection on the year's key successes and issues, together with action planning. The process culminates in the production of the Annual Evaluation Report (AER) in the University template, prepared by the Head of Centre, and submitted for University scrutiny through the Business School. With respect to academic standards, the process requires the AER to provide a summative assessment and formative analysis of student completion, progression and achievement data, and associated recommendations on enhancement and quality assurance; data on student progression at the University, as a measure of the effective management of academic standards; external examiner feedback and responses; and discussion of feedback from tutors, link tutors and QAA reports, to inform action planning.

1.46   As part of the University's collaborative provision, the suite of University-validated UHISC programmes is subject to University mid-term review and, as and when determined by University processes, subject review.

1.47   Study Group processes require ISC-level oversight of programme monitoring to be maintained through Quality Assurance and Enhancement Groups (QAEGs). The University external examiner template, which is used by UHISC for the Level 6 PMP pathways (see Expectation B7), asks external examiners to confirm that they had access to sufficient sample scripts to allow them to comment on the appropriateness of academic standards at all grade levels, and that the academic standards set are appropriate for qualifications at the relevant level and comparable with similar programmes in other UK institutions.

1.48   The Centre Action Plan (CAP) is designed to ensure the implementation of actions emanating from the review and monitoring of modules and programmes. The CAP, which is a live document recording continuous review, is monitored at ISC level by QAEG (as well as at regional and provider levels, respectively by RQAEG and AQAEC).

1.49   Centre Review is the process by which Study Group seeks to assure itself that each ISC is effectively managing academic standards, managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities and publishing reliable information. Heads of Centre report directly to AQAEC regarding Centre Review outcomes and their responses.

1.50   The arrangements for monitoring and review allow the Expectation to be met.

1.51   To test whether the Expectation is met, the review team explored the effectiveness of the arrangements by examining contractual and other documentation including process documents; the Centre handbook; monitoring and review reports; the CAP; internal committee terms of reference and minutes; and external examiner reports. The team also held meetings with current students and former students who have progressed to the University, teaching and administrative staff, senior staff and University representatives.

1.52   The review team examined the AERs for 2013-14 and 2014-15, which are completed in the University template. These set out the core data required by the University, with commentary and analysis, together with the previous two years' data for comparative purposes. The effectiveness of steps previously taken to improve student performance is evaluated, and the reports identify further enhancement measures by reference to the CAP and the response to QAA reviews. AERs provided commentary on positive and negative external examiner feedback, incorporate associated action planning and confirm actions completed from the previous year, including standards-related matters, such as the improvement of internal moderation systems and documentation, and the double marking of presentations.

1.53   In 2016 the University completed a collaborative provision mid-term review of UHISC and a subject review to consider the strategic management and direction of UHISC English provision, incorporating review panel discussions with University Business School and UHISC senior management and the UHISC programme team. The review reports record positive outcomes, including several commendations arising from the English subject review, with a small number of recommendations to further enhance the student experience.

1.54   The Study Group Centre Review completed in March 2015 addressed UHISC's management of academic standards. The panel found assessment practices to be robust and identified student performance monitoring as **good practice**. However, while recognising that the University has ultimate responsibility for academic standards, the panel recommended that UHISC oversight be enhanced through the development of a strengthened academic governance structure, with the establishment of a QAEG (a Centre-only group), as distinct from the Course Committee (a joint committee with UHISC/University membership). The panel further recommended that external examiners be appointed for all programmes; at the date of the review external examiners were not in place, or indeed required by the University, for Level 3 and 4 programmes.

1.55   These recommendations were addressed in the 2014-15 AER and also in the Head of Centre's direct report to AQAEC on UHISC's completed and ongoing actions in response to the review findings. Further evidence confirms that QAEG has been established since October 2015, with formal terms of reference in line with the Study Group model, as distinct from the UHISC/University jointly constituted Course Committee. Following the Centre Review, the CAP monitored progress on the appointment of external examiners for the Level 3 and 4 programmes; at the review visit, senior staff stated that external examiners are being introduced for programmes below L6. They are in the process of being appointed and await confirmation by AQAEC.

1.56   QAEG undertakes ongoing monitoring of the CAP, and receives and discusses the AER, which is also submitted for University scrutiny via the Business School. Steering Committee, which includes Study Group and University senior-level membership, receives and considers the annual Academic and Operations Report, which includes data on retention, performance and progression.

1.57   As external examiners have been (up to the 2015-16 academic year) appointed for the Level 6 provision only, their comment is confined at present to a very small cohort of

students. The available external examiner reports confirm that the academic standards set are appropriate for qualifications at the relevant level and comparable with similar programmes in other UK institutions.

1.58   Processes for the monitoring and review of provision are explicitly addressed to maintain academic standards at the appropriate level. Overall, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

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

Findings

1.59   In following the University's award regulations, external scrutiny of UHISC programmes is undertaken throughout programme approval and validation, and the subsequent examination and periodic review processes.

1.60   External examination of student attainment and progression is being introduced to all UHISC programmes and levels of academic provision following a Centre Review by Study Group in March 2015. The Centre Review team did not include an independent external member as defined by the Study Group Centre Review policy.

1.61   These arrangements allow the Expectation to be met.

1.62   To test whether the Expectation is met, the review team scrutinised Course Assessment Board minutes, the Centre Action Plan, the Centre Review, University Assessment Regulations, and external examiners' reports and met with senior, teaching and support staff and students.

1.63   The University regulations currently require external examiners only for the Pre-Masters (Level 6) provision where an independent external scrutiniser is responsible for ensuring UHISC standards are comparable to those across the higher education sector. UHISC uses the University template for the external examiners' reports at Level 6 and the Study Group template has been adopted for UHISC programmes where examiners are in the process of being appointed, but not yet confirmed and approved by AQAEC.

1.64   University oversight at Course Assessment Boards is provided by Link Tutors and the Designated Academic Liaison Officer for ISC programmes managed through the Business School. There was a mid-term collaborative partnership review undertaken by the University in February 2016. The Centre Action Plan confirms this mid-term partnership review that forms part of a wider compliance exercise undertaken by the University. Documentation relating to the outcomes of this mid-term partnership review were made available to the review team.

1.65   Following thorough consideration of the available documentation and discussion with senior teaching and support staff and students at UHISC and from the University, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of the provider: Summary of findings

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

1.67   UHISC has effective systems in place to maintain academic standards on behalf of the provider. All Expectations are met with associated low risk. There is one feature of good practice relating to UHISC's close relationship with the University.

1.68   The review team concludes that the maintenance of the academic standards of awards at UHISC **meets** UK expectations.

2 Judgement: The quality of student learning opportunities

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

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

Findings

2.1   The International Foundation Year (IFY), International Year One (IY1) and Pre-Masters programme (PMP), designed by UHISC, are validated by the University and carry University credit. The programmes were revalidated in 2013. The Centre Handbook provides guidance on the quality assurance and enhancement procedures adopted by UHISC and Study Group, with respect to the validation, revalidation and annual evaluation of programmes, designed to align with the UKQC, meet University requirements and comply with Study Group's policies and processes.

2.2   The University's validation/revalidation process draws on a range of documentation including a self-evaluation document prepared by the programme team including programme and module specifications completed in the University's templates, annual evaluation reports and external examiner reports. The process is conducted by a panel including appropriate external membership.

2.3   The arrangements in place for the design, development and approval of programmes to assure and enhance the quality of learning opportunities allow the Expectation to be met.

2.4   To test whether the Expectation is met, the review team examined the effectiveness of the practices and procedures by reviewing procedural, validation, revalidation and other documentation including the Centre Handbook and programme specifications. The team also held meetings with current students and former students who have progressed to the University, teaching and administrative staff, senior staff and University representatives.

2.5   The review team had available a range of documentation relating to the validation of the Pre-Masters and International Year 1 (Engineering) programmes in 2011 and the design and revalidation of the entire suite of University-validated UHISC programmes in 2013.

2.6   Programme design was undertaken by UHISC staff in consultation with students and University schools. UHISC's revalidation submission, the programme specifications and staff comment to the review team demonstrate alignment with UHISC strategic learning approaches, particularly the focus on skills development and independent learning, and the work undertaken to ensure a good articulation with the relevant University degree programmes.

2.7   The University validation and revalidation panels were chaired by senior University staff on behalf of the University Learning and Teaching Committee and included appropriate external members. The panels examined and discussed with the programme teams a range of documentation including module and programme specifications. The respective reports record discussion of the quality of students' learning opportunities over a range of areas including course rationale and content, quality assurance arrangements, admission requirements, physical resources, staffing, teaching and learning, assessment, and student support.

2.8   As noted in section A3.1, the incorporation of Academic English Skills at UHISC to replace ESUS has been put back to 2017-18 to allow full University approval processes to be completed. The review team heard that, for the current academic year, UHISC will receive continued Study Group support for ESUS delivery.

2.9   The review team concluded that processes for the approval of programmes, and UHISC arrangements for the design and development of programmes, work effectively to assure the quality of student learning opportunities. The team concluded that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission*

Findings

2.10   The selection and admission of students is undertaken centrally by the Study Group Admissions Centre and is managed through a set of detailed guidelines and procedures. The initial consideration of a student application and decision to issue an offer of a place is processed through the Study Group's Singapore Hub. Subsequent confirmation of acceptance at UHISC is managed by the Study Group's UK Hub.

2.11   The Admissions Policy and Structure document provides definitive information on recruitment and selection. Admissions are managed and scrutinised by a workforce trained to ensure applicants have the required academic qualification, are UKVI compliant, and that a desired progression route is available at the University. All international students are expected to demonstrate a level of competency in the English language relative to the demands of the programme being studied. All applications are processed through Singapore and UK centres, and review compliance with English language requirements. UHISC also provides an English Language Preparation programme as pre-entry for prospective students who require additional English tuition prior to acceptance onto Foundation or PMP.

2.12   These arrangements for admissions allow the Expectation to be met.

2.13   To test whether the Expectation is met, the review team scrutinised guidelines for admissions, application forms, the admissions, complaints and appeals policy and the induction survey. It met with senior, teaching and support staff and students.

2.14   The review team discussed and confirmed the involvement of the Head of Centre in making a decision on exceptional admission cases. The team also heard that the University's International Admission Team refer international student applicants to HISC for consideration through the BES procedures.

2.15   Students who met the review team during the visit reported receiving accurate and detailed information about the admission and selection procedures. An Admissions, Complaints and Appeals policy has been introduced to ensure all applications are treated fairly and consistently.

2.16   Discussions with senior management staff from UHISC and the University identified **good practice** in the strengthened integration of international recruitment to UHISC through the co-funded appointment of a Head of International Projects Manager. The review team heard this recent development helped promote and support closer coordination of recruitment and marketing activities for UHISC provision in cooperation with the University's International Office. This is linked to the good practice in section A2.1.

2.17   Students reported being pleased with their induction programme. This programme contained social, cultural and educational activities, including an introduction to the University study facilities available to ISC students. An Induction Survey conducted by UHISC revealed a high level of student satisfaction over the organisation and content of the introductory activities programme.

2.18   The review team is able to confirm the recruitment, selection and admissions procedures operated by UHISC, in conjunction with Study Group policies and University support, are transparent, inclusive, valid and reliable. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching*

Findings

2.19   UHISC's approach to teaching, learning and assessment is guided by University strategy, which informed the development and design of the current programmes. The key features comprise interactivity, independent learning and group work, to develop critical thinking, transferable, practical and research skills and prepare students for transition to university study. In accordance with Study Group requirements, UHISC is developing its own teaching and learning strategy. A draft strategy, formulated with the involvement of all UHISC staff, in line with University strategic aims for 2013-18, reiterating and developing UHISC's current approaches (including further enhancement of the VLE) and articulating the strategy for the professional development of staff, was recently presented and discussed at the Study Group Curriculum, Learning and Enhancement Committee. Following further development work, the strategy is currently in final draft, for peer review within the ISC network, consultation with the University and subsequent submission for Study Group approval.

2.20   This strategic approach is supported by systems in place to ensure the suitability of staff on appointment; to maintain and enhance teaching quality through teaching observation, appraisal and staff development; and to keep learning opportunities and teaching practices under systematic review.

2.21   UHISC arrangements for the maintenance, review and enhancement of the provision of learning opportunities allow the Expectation to be met.

2.22   To test whether the Expectation is met, the team explored the effectiveness of the arrangements by examining contractual, strategy and process documentation and templates; revalidation documentation; programme specifications; handbooks; staff development records; external examiner reports; and module evaluation documentation. The team also held meetings with current and former students who have progressed to the University, teaching and administrative staff, senior staff and University representatives.

2.23   Strategic learning approaches are embedded in programme design. Programme specifications articulate a focus on the development of cognitive, transferable, practical and HE study skills developed in an interactive environment, through lectures, seminars, small groups, workshops and independent study and research. Students clearly value these approaches, and mentioned to the review team, in particular, the interactive focus of class sessions and the opportunities to develop independent learning and research skills.

2.24   Study Group has responsibility for the recruitment, appointment, induction and development of staff. All tutors must be approved by the University before commencing duties. Staff CVs are scrutinised at programme validation and revalidation and provided to the University when new tutors are recruited. UHISC has appointed, as sessional tutors, a small number of University PhD students, mainly for the engineering pathway. All have been approved by the University for teaching, following their completion of University training in teaching and assessment. Senior staff consider that teaching by PhD students makes a significant contribution to students' strong performance in their degree programmes. These

arrangements provide a further example of the closeness of the UHISC's relationship with the University. (This relates to the good practice in section A2.1.) Staff told the review team that they received a useful induction and, as new members of staff, they were fully supported in their role by senior staff and colleagues.

2.25   The annual cycle of teaching observation and appraisal by senior management is designed to identify personal targets and individual development needs, good practice and areas for improvement. Staff confirmed that all tutors undergo management observation and appraisal by senior managers, at least annually. Peer observation, currently undertaken within the English and Business teams, has been identified as an area for further work. Progress has already been made, with the development of a UHISC peer observation template which provides for staff to work in peer groups, focusing on general areas of good practice as well as specific target areas.

2.26   UHISC staff have full access to University staff development, and are encouraged to attend external conference and training events, with UHISC financial support. A number of tutors are completing PhDs, and time is allocated to allow them to attend associated external CPD. In-house staff development has included Excel and VLE training. Individual staff development need is identified through appraisal, and tutors gave examples of staff development they had undertaken following identification of a specific need during appraisal.

2.27   The review team examined a log of CPD completed by UHISC staff in 2015-16 and the CPD plan for 2016-17. The CPD plan was helpful in identifying certain focus areas for the coming year, for instance VLE and technology-enabled learning. The review team also noted the Course Committee's information on staff development, for example, the conference in July 2016 and the plans for 2016-17.

2.28   The VLE has been developed to provide students with electronic access to a range of learning and assessment materials, including module guides, reading lists, resource materials and assessment briefs. Students were happy with the materials provided on the VLE and said that all tutors uploaded these.

2.29   External examiners are asked to comment on the appropriateness of the overall approach to teaching, learning and assessment, and the quality of knowledge and skills demonstrated by students. As external examiners have been (up to the 2015-16 academic year) appointed for the Level 6 provision only, comment is confined at present to a very small cohort of students. The most recent reports examined by the review team identify limited critical and application skills among the majority of students, but comment positively on the breadth of module content coverage, improvements to students' referencing skills, and action taken by tutors to enhance students' ability to build up a sustained argument throughout a piece of work.

2.30   UHISC responds formally to external examiner feedback, and actions arising are captured and followed through in Annual Evaluation Reports (AERs) and in the CAP. AERs also consider student feedback on teaching quality, which is sought through end-of-course surveys. Student evaluation surveys indicate that students are generally satisfied with the quality of teaching.

2.31   Strategic learning approaches are clearly articulated. Overall, UHISC keeps learning opportunities and teaching practices under systematic review and development. Students confirm their satisfaction with the learning opportunities provided. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

2.32   UHISC views the student experience from a holistic perspective, encompassing both academic and personal development. Accordingly, systems and strategies are in place to support the student journey: induction arrangements; a personal tutor system incorporating student progress monitoring and identification of students at risk of failure; additional academic support where need is identified; the use of project and portfolio-based learning to develop independent and reflective skills; and preparation of students for the University and University study.

2.33   These arrangements allow the Expectation to be met.

2.34   To test the Expectation, the review team explored the effectiveness of the arrangements by examining programme review reports; handbooks; schemes of work; induction material; student progress monitoring documentation; tutor training notes; module evaluation documentation; online information; and retention, progression and achievement data. The team also held meetings with current students and former students who have progressed to the University, teaching and administrative staff, senior staff and University representatives.

2.35   Induction provides a full week's programme of activity including tours of the campus, sports facilities, library and town; a talk from the University Students' Union; diagnostic testing in English and Maths (subsequently followed up by additional classes as appropriate); completion of administrative matters; and social events. Students found induction helpful and enjoyable, especially the social events and trips to York and London.

2.36   All students are allocated a personal tutor and attend weekly group tutorial sessions in the first term, beginning during induction week, then one-to-one sessions for the rest of the year. Group sessions follow a scheme of work covering various areas including cultural expectations, studying in the UK, information on assessment, how to avoid academic misconduct and study management. Personal tutors track individual students' progress via a template student log completed by module and personal tutors and monitored by the Head of Centre to identify students at risk of failure, and the Study Group RAG-rating system is employed for every student. Students said that all staff are accessible and helpful. Students arriving as minors are provided with additional support by the designated Safeguarding Lead, clearly valued by students in this position.

2.37   The personal tutor team, which is led by the Personal Tutor Coordinator, receives focused training and extensive information, support and guidance for the role. The Personal Tutor Handbook is a comprehensive compendium of concepts, advice, procedures and materials. Its notable features include a research-based analysis of the inhibitors to student achievement; details of the responsibilities of the personal tutor role and the skills and qualities it demands; the content of the group sessions; liaison with academic tutors; identifying and supporting at-risk students; and reporting and attendance procedures and guidance. Training by the Personal Tutor Coordinator reinforces the handbook information and provides guidance on the technicalities of online reporting, supplemented by additional guidance on session materials for new personal tutors. Staff comments to the review team, as well their clear understanding of and enthusiasm for the role and its contribution to student support and achievement, confirmed the effectiveness of the training and guidance

provided. The comprehensive training and written guidance provided for personal tutors that support their role constitute **good practice**.

2.38   Additional academic support is provided through revision classes for students failing any modules; 'Stretch and Challenge' classes designed to enhance English proficiency; and workshop sessions in Art and Engineering, introduced last academic year, which have received positive feedback from students.

2.39   Skills development is embedded across the curriculum (see Expectation B3), and also within specific skills-focused modules. The Independent Portfolio, delivered through ESUS, provides a structured framework in an engaging format designed to help students focus on their individual strengths and weaknesses and develop reflective and critical analysis skills. The Personal Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS), an IFY project-based module, emphasises transferable skills - team working and participation, self-management, creative thinking and reflective learning - in preparation for degree study and employment.

2.40   UHISC prepares students for the University and University study in other ways, in particular through Link Tutors, whose job description has recently been reviewed and updated following work with the Designated Academic Liaison Officer from the Business School. Activity supporting transition includes attendance at University lectures, visits to University schools, talks from University staff, the use of University laboratories, and interaction with former ISC students who have progressed to the University.

2.41   This year, UHISC has introduced a student mentoring scheme to support students' integration into UHISC and their prospective transition to the University. Former students currently on University degree programmes will act as 'buddies' to current students. Several of the former students whom the review team met had already volunteered to undertake this role, had received a briefing from the Head of Centre, and spoke with great enthusiasm and excitement about the 'buddy' role. They showed a clear understanding of the benefits of the scheme and the contribution they can make to its effectiveness.

2.42   UHISC, which moved to a new building in 2013, has been located within the University campus since its establishment in 2008. Students have full access to University facilities, as specified in the collaborative agreement, including University email, the VLE and the Student Portal (with access to library, online books, journals and educational video links). Students were happy with the resources and mentioned, in particular, the benefits to their learning provided through the use of University laboratories and equipment. (This relates to the good practice in section A2.1.)

2.43   The University provides UHISC with data on former students' achievement on their degree programmes. This data, together with data on retention on UHISC programmes and progression to the University, is monitored, analysed and reported in annual programme review. The data shows consistently strong student retention, achievement and progression and consistently strong performance of students at the University.

2.44   There are effective systems and processes for the provision, monitoring and evaluation of arrangements and resources which support student development and achievement. The review team identified the training and guidance provided for personal tutors as **good practice**. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B5: Student Engagement*

Findings

2.45   The UHISC student voice and student involvement strategy is set out in the Centre Handbook. UHISC is committed to receiving and responding to student views and seeks student input to assure and enhance the quality of learning opportunities through a variety of mechanisms. Students are able to engage collaboratively via the student representation system and individually through induction and module surveys.

2.46   These arrangements allow the Expectation to be met.

2.47   To test the Expectation, the review team explored the effectiveness of the arrangements by examining a range of documentation including staff and student handbooks, student evaluation survey documentation, annual programme review reports and internal meeting minutes. The team also held meetings with current students and former students who have progressed to the University, teaching and administrative staff, senior staff and University representatives.

2.48   There are two levels of student representation at the UHISC, effected through course representatives, who are briefed on the role in tutorial sessions, and Student Panel members, who receive a briefing on the role from the Head of Centre. Course representatives, elected by their peers during personal tutor group meetings, provide the communication channel between members of their group and Student Panel members. Student Panel members are selected by interview (conducted by former and/or current Panel members and UHISC management) from course representatives, normally to represent a specific programme pathway. In meetings, the review team explored the rationale for the involvement of senior managers in these interviews. Senior staff stated that this is to facilitate the process, and that, in practice, student and staff panel members reach agreement on the appointments. Student comments to the review team indicated that students consider the process to be fair.

2.49   The Student Panel is established to provide a direct line of communication between UHISC management and the student body. In accordance with its formal terms of reference, it meets at least once per term, is chaired by the Deputy Head of Centre and includes within its membership student representatives and senior, teaching and administrative staff. Meeting records, in the form of a rolling log which is accessible on the VLE, together with students' comment to the review team, confirm that the Student Panel works effectively in reviewing student feedback from module and induction surveys and channelled through student representatives; reporting on action taken or to be taken in response; reviewing feedback from external examiners; and agreeing actions and information to be communicated to the student body as a whole. Meetings are generally well attended by staff and students.

2.50   QAEG has been established since 2015-16. Student representative membership (and attendance for non-confidential business only) provides the opportunity for direct student engagement with quality assurance and enhancement, clearly valued by students, in particular through consideration of the Centre Action Plan, and annual programme review. Student representatives actively participate in meetings, and students whom the review team met mentioned, in particular, that they were involved in consideration of the CAP at QAEG meetings.

2.51 Student representatives are also members of the joint University/UHISC course committee, although UHISC acknowledges that, despite its encouragement, student attendance has been problematic because of the timings of the meetings. It is currently working with the University to address this.

2.52 Individual student feedback is gathered through induction and module evaluation surveys. The outcomes are collated and analysed and the outcomes considered, variously, at course committee and Student Panel meetings and in module and programme review.

2.53 AERs report on student feedback from end-of-course reviews and the Student Panel. Although commentary and evaluation of actions taken or to be taken in response is somewhat limited in the AERs, internal meeting minutes and student and staff comments to the review team confirm that UHISC listens and responds to the student voice. Examples include the more timely provision of information about reassessment dates; extended opening of the student common room; and changes to the delivery style in maths sessions.

2.54 UHISC takes deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience. The team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

2.55   UHISC adheres to the University's assessment regulations and procedures. The Student Handbook provides detailed information and guidance on assessment policies and practices, and is provided to students at the onset of their course of study. More detailed information on assessment content, learning outcomes, marking criteria and feedback mechanisms is provided in module handbooks.

2.56   An Exams Officer manages the assessment schedules, secures the storage of student marks on the University's assessment database (ASIS) and ensures students receive an electronic link to the assessment regulations. UHISC provides additional guidance on assessment regulations and procedures to students through meeting with their personal tutors, supported by a personal tutorial module on the VLE.

2.57   These arrangements for assessment allow the Expectation to be met.

2.58   To test whether the Expectation is met, the review team scrutinised assessment regulations, assessment schedules, student handbooks, the Centre Handbook and minutes of assessment boards. It also met senior, teaching and support staff and students.

2.59   The review team can confirm that the setting, marking and moderation of assessments for academic subjects is undertaken by UHISC tutors and monitored by the Head of Department or Subject Coordinator, or a member of the University staff. The assessment of English language competency through English and Skills for University Study (ESUS) is delivered at UHISC but produced and moderated centrally to ensure consistency of outcomes across Study Group centres and conformity with benchmarks.

2.60   The review team enquired how UHISC had responded to the significant proportion of international students studying the ESUS programme who had engaged in academic misconduct during the 2013-14 academic year. UHISC gave assurances that steps had been taken to address plagiarism and collusion in assessment tasks, including the enhanced use of detection software as a diagnostic tool for students, additional guidance provided during the induction programme and within each module and by personal tutors, and communication with student sponsors where appropriate. Discussion with student representatives confirmed their understanding of the nature of academic misconduct, and the provision of information and support available to reduce the likelihood of academic indiscretions. The review team **affirms** the steps being taken to minimise academic misconduct in assessment.

2.61   In accordance with University guidelines, a sample of at least 15 per cent (or a minimum of 10 scripts) of each subject assessment item at all levels of study is moderated by module tutors. At present and for Pre-Masters programmes (Level 6), further scrutiny of assessment tasks, marking and moderation is completed by an external examiner to assure the accuracy and parity of student attainment. UHISC is seeking to extend this external scrutiny to include its International Foundation Year (Level 4) provision in 2016-17.

2.62   After reading external examiner reports and in meeting academic staff, the review team explored how internal moderation procedures were conducted across programmes. Some external examiners had reported inconsistency and uncertainty in the internal moderation procedures, and in the nature and extent of feedback to students. UHISC uses experienced mentors and monitoring by the Head of Department or Subject Coordinator. There has also been additional staff training, and standardisation meetings used to address these inconsistencies. More recent external examiner reports confirmed the effectiveness of these measures. The University provides staff development activities in addition to those available in UHISC. Students receive their provisional assessment marks through the University's Student Portal, prior to subsequent ratification by the Course Assessment Board (CAB) Revision classes are made available to students who are required to undertake reassessments.

2.63   Through discussion and a review of documentary evidence, the review team is assured that the assessment of students is equitable, valid and reliable. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B7: External Examining*

Findings

2.64   The University regulations governing the appointment, duties and responsibilities of external examiners are applied to UHISC examiners required for all Pre-Masters (Level 6) provision. External examiners for the UHISC programmes are nominated by UHISC and follow the University's approval process.

2.65   In accordance with a recent Study Group directive, UHISC is introducing external examiners across all of its academic programmes during 2016-17. Study Group's nomination, approval and induction processes are being followed for appointment to these positions for levels 3 and 4. A record of external examiner appointments is maintained at UHISC and with Study Group.

2.66   External examiners for the Pre-Masters programmes review assessment items prior to publication and assure the quality and standards of subsequent marking and moderation by UHISC or University tutors. External examiner reports for the Pre-Masters programmes are submitted using the University's standard template.

2.67   These arrangements for external examining allow the Expectation to be met.

2.68   To test the Expectation, the review team scrutinised external examiner reports, assessment board minutes, module and programme reviews and Centre action plans. It met with senior, teaching and support staff and students.

2.69   UHISC responds formally to all recommendations from its external examiners. External examiner reports for the Pre-Masters programmes in Art and in Business noted particular concerns about the internal moderation procedures and the consistency of feedback to students. Formal responses by UHISC staff include the implementation of standardised internal moderation and feedback forms. The effectiveness of these actions has yet to be evaluated across the programmes. External examiner reports are considered by the CAB and Course Committee, and inform the annual monitoring and review process. The CAB requires external examiner attendance, though not necessarily from each of the programmes being examined at the Board. Actions emanating from reports are incorporated into the Centre Action Plan (CAP). Formal responses to examiners' reports are considered by the Course Committee before being reported to the Study Group's Academic and Quality Assurance Enhancement Committee.

2.70   UHISC follows Study Group policy on publishing external examiner reports, in coordination with the University's requirements. A Student Panel provides the opportunity for student representatives to consider these reports, although students who met the review team stated that they were not aware of the reports.

2.71   UHISC makes scrupulous use of external examiner reports. It gives full consideration to recommendations, takes action where necessary and incorporates these into UHISC's action plan. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

2.72   Under the contractual arrangements with the University, UHISC is subject to the University's annual course evaluation, subject review, collaborative mid-term review and revalidation processes. UHISC must also comply with Study Group's monitoring and review processes, comprising ongoing programme monitoring through the Centre Action Plan (CAP), annual monitoring and Centre Review. The Centre Handbook provides guidance on the quality assurance and enhancement procedures adopted by UHISC and Study Group, with respect to the validation, revalidation and annual evaluation of programmes, designed to align with the UKQC, meet University requirements and comply with Study Group's policies and processes.

2.73   Annual review culminates in the production of the Annual Evaluation Report (AER) completed in the University template. University procedures require AERs to be streamlined to focus on external examiners' comments, course statistics, student evaluation and feedback, responses to reviews and identification of best practice, with a brief report including commentary on any issues raised in the previous year's exercise and actions for the coming year. Study Group processes require ISC-level oversight of programme monitoring to be maintained through Quality Assurance and Enhancement Groups (QAEGs).

2.74   The University external examiner template, which is used by UHISC for Level 6 provision, asks external examiners to comment on the quality of knowledge and skills demonstrated by the students; the appropriateness of the overall approach to teaching, learning and assessment as indicated by student performance; and the currency of the curriculum and the adequacy of learning resources.

2.75   The Centre Action Plan (CAP) is designed to ensure the implementation of actions emanating from the review and monitoring of modules and programmes. The CAP, which is a live document recording continuous review, is monitored at ISC level by QAEG (as well as at regional and provider levels, respectively by RQAEG and AQAEC).

2.76   Centre Review is the process by which Study Group seeks to assure itself that each ISC is effectively managing academic standards, managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities and publishing reliable information. Heads of Centre report directly to AQAEC regarding Centre Review outcomes and their responses.

2.77   The arrangements for monitoring and review allow the Expectation to be met.

2.78   To test whether the Expectation is met, the review team explored the effectiveness of the arrangements by examining contractual and other documentation including process documents; the Centre handbook; monitoring and review reports; the CAP; internal meeting minutes; and external examiner reports. The team also held meetings with current students and former students who have progressed to the University, teaching and administrative staff, senior staff and University representatives.

2.79   The review team examined the AERs for 2013-14 and 2014-15, which are informed by module review and completed in the University template. With respect to the quality of learning opportunities, these AERs report on the progress and/or completion of actions

identified in the previous year, typically covering learning, teaching and assessment, staff development, programme development, student engagement and student support. The reports set out the main issues raised by external examiners, in Student Panel meetings and in module and induction surveys. Action planning for the coming year draws together the actions to be taken in response, though it is somewhat limited in its response to student feedback. The 2014-15 AER action plan captures many of the matters raised as recommendations in the Centre Review conducted during that academic year. The outcomes of the collaborative mid-term review and the English subject review are discussed in section A3.3.

2.80   The Study Group Centre Review completed in March 2015 addressed the quality of students' learning opportunities. In accordance with Study Group requirements, the review panel met students, senior managers, teaching and administrative/support staff and University representatives. A number of commendations and features of good practice were identified, covering learning and teaching, student support and staff development. There were also recommendations, concerning student induction, feedback to students on module surveys, and student representation. While the 2014-15 AER addressed many of the Centre Review recommendations, the Head of Centre reported directly to AQAEC on completed and ongoing actions in response to the review findings (as noted above) and actions were generally addressed explicitly and comprehensively in the CAP. QAEG undertakes ongoing monitoring of the CAP, and receives and discusses the AER.

2.81   The processes for monitoring and review, which provide an effective mechanism for assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, are, overall, implemented systematically and consistently. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

2.82   Academic appeals and complaints procedures for UHISC students follow those defined by the University of Huddersfield regulations, and are made available through the Centre Handbook and in the Student Handbook. This information is supplemented by a Study Group Complaints and Appeals policy document that identifies the informal and formal procedures surrounding complaints and appeals across its centres.

2.83   These arrangements for complaints and appeals allow the Expectation to be met.

2.84   To test whether the Expectation is met, the review team scrutinised the complaints and appeals policies of UHISC and the University and programme-validated documents, and met senior, teaching and support staff and students.

2.85   University procedures governing appeals and complaints were pre-eminent for the validated programmes in UHISC. The Head of Centre, Deputy Head of Centre or Personal Tutors provide guidance to students who are considering an appeal or complaint. Additional information on University regulations governing assessment, extenuating circumstances and academic integrity is provided in the Student Handbook. The University's Students' Union has an officer dedicated to guiding students who might be considering a complaint or appeal.

2.86   Informal complaints are considered locally by UHISC staff and can be raised at Student Panel meetings. Formal complaints that require further investigation are escalated to the Head of Centre or Deputy Head of Centre, and notified to the Regional Director or to a senior manager in the Business School. A very small number of academic appeals were recorded and considered by UHISC in the 2015-16 academic year.

2.87   UHISC with the University have clear and explicit procedures for complaints and appeals. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The quality of student learning opportunities:
Summary of findings

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

2.89   UHISC has effective systems in place to manage the quality of learning opportunities. There are two features of good practice relating to the role of the Head of International Projects and support for personal tutors. There is one affirmation regarding the steps being taken to minimise academic misconduct.

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

3   Judgement: The quality of the information about learning opportunities

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

Quality Code, Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision

Findings

3.1   UHISC has rigorous systems in place for monitoring information. The Centre works closely with Study Group and the University in producing and checking information. The Study Group's Academic Quality Handbook specifies the nature and extent of documentation to be made available at UHISC. These documents include a Centre Handbook, handbooks for staff and students, programme and module specifications, and the visually impressive UHISC brochure.

3.2   These arrangements allow the Expectation to be met.

3.3   To test whether the Expectation is met, the review team scrutinised information on the website and in marketing materials, the prospectus and brochures. It met with senior, teaching and support staff and students.

3.4   The development of UHISC's academic brochure is dovetailed with the University's procedures for publication of its prospectus to ensure transition details for student progression onto degree programmes are valid and precise.

3.5   The accuracy and completeness of information in these documents and any electronic versions available on the UHISC website or Unilearn are the responsibility of the Head of Centre. Annual monitoring of these information sources is conducted by the Regional Director and reported to AQAEC, with additional oversight by the University's International Office.

3.6   The development and provision of marketing and recruitment information for the UHISC follows Study Group policy, guidance and procedures and adheres to University guidelines. The co-funded Head of International Projects Manager coordinates the production and publication of accurate UHISC marketing information.

3.7   Students receive information prior to application and after acceptance. They stated that this was accurate and reliable. UHISC has processes that ensure information for intended audiences is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. The review team concludes the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

3.9   UHISC, with Study Group and the University, has rigorous systems in place to ensure that information for intended audiences is fit for purpose, accurate and trustworthy.

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

4 Commentary on the enhancement of student learning opportunities

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

Findings

4.1 UHISC affirms a commitment to the continuing improvement of students' learning opportunities within a culture of enhancement. Its strategic approach is driven, informed and supported by its close relationship with the University; the integration and implementation of Study Group imperatives and initiatives; and the outcomes of quality assurance processes, especially through student engagement.

4.2 Close and effective collaborative working with the University, particularly through the Link Tutor relationship, provides a fruitful context for enhancement activity, such as the further development and extension of the programme of events supporting students' transition to the University (Expectations A2.1, B4).

4.3 The formalisation of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Group in 2015-16, as distinct from the joint University/UHISC course committee, has completed UHISC's integration into the Study Group governance structure. This allows a strengthened UHISC focus on Study Group initiatives, such as the development of the UHISC teaching and learning strategy and the implementation of the employability framework. (See section B3 and Commentary on Student Employability.)

4.4 UHISC takes deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience. Overall, the evidence shows that UHISC listens to the student voice and uses it to identify and act upon opportunities for further enhancement (see section B5).

5 Commentary on the Theme: Student Employability

Findings

5.1 UHISC has embarked on a staged process for enhancing student engagement with employability skills within the Foundation Year and International Year programmes. Initial integration of employability skills within the academic curriculum of these programmes is followed by guided and personalised development of an Employability Skills Development Plan (ESDP) with each student.

5.2 The integration of vocational and interpersonal skills into the Business and Engineering foundation programmes has been achieved and are linked in to the University's *MyCareer* employability scheme and the Study Group's implementation of its *CareerAhead* programme across centres.

5.3 Support for this development planning is provided by UHISC tutors and the University's Careers Advice Services team. The final stage is for UHISC students to progress onto University degree programmes that support various work-based learning opportunities (for example, sandwich courses).

5 Commentary on the Theme: Student Employability

Glossary

This glossary is a quick-reference guide to terms in this report that may be unfamiliar to some readers. Definitions of key operational terms are also given on pages 27 to 29 of the Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges) handbook.

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

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

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

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

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

Credit(s)
A means of quantifying and recognising learning, used by most institutions that provide higher education **programmes of study**, expressed as numbers of credits at a specific level.

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

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

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

e-learning
See technology enhanced or enabled learning.

Embedded college
Colleges, often operating as part of a network, that are embedded on or near the campuses of two or more UK higher education institutions (HEI) and that primarily provide preparatory programmes for higher education.

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

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

Flexible and distributed learning
A programme or module that does not require the student to attend classes or events at particular times and locations. See also **distance learning**.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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

Technology enhanced or enabled learning (or **e-learning**)
Learning that is delivered or supported through the use of technology.

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

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

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