Khalsa College London

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

June 2013

Key findings about Khalsa College London

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in June 2013, the QAA review team (the team) considers that there can be **confidence** in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the standards of the programmes it offers on behalf of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, the Chartered Management Institute and The Institute of Commercial Management.

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

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

Good practice

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

- the monitoring of student progress through the introduction of formative tests and assessments for externally examined courses (paragraph 2.6)
- the extensive individualised academic support (paragraph 2.10).

Recommendations

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

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

- align its policies and procedures with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) and other relevant external reference points (paragraphs 1.7 and 1.8)
- ensure that publication of student results is in line with the *Data Protection Act 1998* (paragraphs 2.8 and 3.3).

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

- produce course development plans based on the outcomes of the quarterly reviews (paragraphs 1.6 and 2.3)
- develop a single teaching and learning strategy that aligns with Part B: 'Assuring and enhancing academic quality'*, Chapter B3: Learning and teaching* of the Quality Code (paragraph 2.5)
- implement a staff development policy that links to quarterly review (paragraph 2.13)
- review its prospectus and website to align with Part C: 'Information about higher education provision' of the Quality Code (paragraph 3.1).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)[1] (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at Khalsa College London (the College), which is a privately funded provider of higher education. The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the provider discharges its stated responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes of study that the provider delivers on behalf of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, the Chartered Management Institute and The Institute of Commercial Management. The review was carried out by Ms Colette Coleman, Mr Peter Hyman and Dr Ana-Maria Pascal (reviewers) and Prof Edward J Esche (Coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the *[Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook](#)*.[2] Evidence in support of the review included, meetings with staff and students, College policy documents and handbooks, student course files, staff folders, agreements from the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants and The Institute of Commercial Management, site visit letter from the latter and agreement and centre visit report from the Chartered Management Institute.

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

- the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code)
- the Qualifications and Credit Framework
- qualification structure and syllabus of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants
- centre assessment guidance of the Chartered Management Institute
- accreditation documentation from The Institute of Commercial Management
- Data Protection Act 1998.

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

The College was established in 1985. It is located in Harrow, Middlesex, and it serves both the local and overseas student market. It offers a mixture of professional and academic programmes. The College is accredited by the Accreditation Service for International Colleges. It is approved by Ofsted for provision other than higher education and as a highly trusted sponsor by the UK Border Agency. It occupies three floors of one building.

The College is accredited to run professional programmes for the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA), The Institute of Commercial Management (ICM), the Chartered Management Institute (CMI), the Association of International Accountants (AIA) and the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM). Programmes for the latter two have not yet been offered. The policy of the College is to recruit students to levels 2 to 7 of the professional programmes. The College also offers General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and General Certificate of Education Advanced Level English, and English as a second language programmes.

In 2009 the College began daytime classes for local students and recruited overseas students. The main recruitment is from India and Nepal because of the historic and cultural

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[1] www.qaa.ac.uk/educational-oversight
[2] www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx

background of the College. There are currently 111 full-time higher education students registered with the College. There are nine full-time members of academic staff.

At the time of the review, the provider offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath their awarding organisations with student numbers in brackets:

Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA)
- Chartered Management Accountant - certificate level 7 (43)
- Chartered Management Accountant - operational level 7 (40)

Chartered Management Institute (CMI)
- Diploma in Management and Leadership - level 5 (5)
- Diploma in Management and Leadership - level 6 (13)
- Strategic Management and Leadership - level 7 (1)

The Institute of Commercial Management (ICM)
- Diploma in Business Studies - level 5 (2)

The provider's stated responsibilities

The College's mission is to offer affordable and accessible education to the student community it serves. Its goals are to provide access to different levels of education, to offer careers counselling that meets the needs of the students and industry, to provide opportunities for personal growth and to deliver support programmes to help students achieve their goals and utilise the skills gained to develop in the business environment.

The College is responsible for the recruitment of students, their induction and guidance. With the exception of CMI awards, the awarding organisations have responsibility for curriculum design, development and assessment. For CMI awards, College staff undertake summative assessment and internal verification before student work is submitted for external verification. The College has responsibility for programme delivery. Students are prepared for the examinations of CIMA and ICM. The College is required to respond to monitoring reviews from the external verifiers. It is responsible for providing learning resources, and gathering and acting upon student feedback. The College is responsible for the completeness and accuracy of information in its online prospectus, learning materials, including its virtual learning environment, and website.

Recent developments

The College has recently been accredited by two new awarding organisations: the Association of International Accountants in October 2012; and the Institute of Leadership and Management in February 2013. It has not recruited to awards from either. The College has also increased significantly its recruitment in the last year, from 69 to 111 registered full-time higher education students, and hired two new full-time teaching staff.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the review team. Four student representatives from the Student Council gathered evidence and wrote a statement on the student experience. This document provided useful evidence for the team. The team also met 12 students during the preparatory meeting and the review visit to gather views of the wider student body.

Detailed findings about Khalsa College London

1   Academic standards

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

1.1   The College's arrangements for the management of academic standards are sound. There are appropriate structures for the management and administration of academic programmes and provision of support for students. The Board of Trustees and Board of Governors have oversight of the strategic objectives of the College and day-to-day management is delegated to the Director Principal. He is supported by the Principal and Vice Principal. Programme delivery is managed at operational level by three course coordinators. New courses have designated course coordinators.

1.2   College staff work together effectively to manage academic standards. Programmes are overseen by the Director Principal and Vice Principal, who have responsibility for academic staff and manage operational delivery, including responsibilities for teaching, assessment and quality assurance. The Student Welfare Officer is responsible for admissions and student support overseen by the Vice Principal and Director Principal.

1.3   The College has effective links with its awarding organisations and courses are subject to annual reaccreditation. Reports received indicate that the College is meeting standards. CMI has introduced a moderator who has worked with the course team to develop academic management. The College is in regular correspondence with ICM and it confirms that standards are met. The College ensures that staff are fully aware of awarding organisation requirements through its meeting structure, staff files, annual training and virtual learning environment.

1.4   The Academic Board ensures effective oversight and maintenance of academic standards. It is chaired by the Director Principal and membership comprises the Principal, Vice Principal, course coordinators and guest staff members. It is responsible for all aspects of academic standards, learning opportunities and the Quality Code. It is responsible for the approval of new programmes and also considers sufficiency of resources. Since the last REO in 2012 the College has revised the committee structures to clarify operation, responsibilities and terms of reference.

1.5   The Academic Board is underpinned by weekly staff meetings which ensure effective management of courses and that student issues are addressed through attendance by the Student Representative Body (SRB). These meetings also provide an opportunity for sharing good practice. Management of student matters operates well through day-to-day interactions facilitated by the small size of the College. As a result, the support environment is strong, with good contact between tutors and students.

1.6   There is an effective monitoring process which takes place quarterly and is reported to Academic Board. This includes a review of student performance and achievement, teaching observations, student evaluation of teachers and teacher self-assessment. There are no formal annual monitoring reports as these are not required by awarding organisations. While steps have been taken to ensure that the quarterly review is robust, it would be **desirable** for the College to produce course development plans based on the outcomes of the quarterly reviews.

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

1.7   The quality assurance policy is underdeveloped. It is eight sentences and along with other policies does not make specific reference to relevant external reference points. The quality assurance policy is supplemented by a quality cycle document which indicates key monthly activities. A policy handbook and staff folders provide sufficient guidance to staff on the management of standards. In response to the previous REO, the policy handbook and quality cycle have been revised and the quality manual content has been integrated into the policy handbook. It is **advisable** for the College to align its policies and procedures with the Quality Code and other relevant external reference points.

1.8   While the College engages with awarding organisation guidelines there is insufficient engagement with other external reference points, such as the Quality Code. All programmes delivered by the College are accredited to the Qualifications and Credit Framework by the awarding organisations that develop and review the specifications and assessments. The College's main relationship to these external reference points is through the application of guidance from the awarding organisations.

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

1.9   Internal moderation to assure standards is effective and the College ensures that awarding organisations requirements are met. External moderation reports and awarding organisation visits confirm that standards are maintained. The College has assessment responsibility for CMI but not for ICM or CIMA. For CMI programmes, the awarding organisation is responsible for external verification of student work which is assessed by the College staff and overseen by the Vice Principal. The College has responded to issues raised in the CMI report through internal verification training and developing close links with CMI. CIMA and ICM assessments are externally set. These awards have external examinations and the College is only responsible for formative assessment. The Academic Board monitors actions required by moderator reports.

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

2   Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1   The College's management of the quality of learning opportunities is effective. The overall structures and processes for managing the provision are those described in paragraphs 1.1 and 1.4. Responsibility for the management and enhancement of the learning opportunities rests with the Academic Board, which formally meets once a term to review progression data and feedback from staff and students.

2.2   The College has clear academic review processes. It has recently formalised its procedures for recording, implementing and monitoring the management and enhancement of learning opportunities by the Academic Board. It has improved its recording of the Board's activities and introduced quarterly monitoring processes that look at student feedback and teacher evaluation.

2.3   The College's use of the review outcomes is underdeveloped. Termly progression data and student feedback are available, but not used to inform a development plan. See also paragraph 1.6.

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

2.4   An outline of the College's use of external reference points is in paragraph 1.8. The College uses the reference points of its awarding organisations, in particular with regards to staff qualifications and training, teaching methods, and resources , but consideration of the Quality Code is just emerging. It has been mentioned at Academic Board meetings and the College has consulted it on issues to do with student engagement and admissions.

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

2.5   The College does not have a teaching and learning strategy. However, it has clear policies on assessments, staff performance and examination appeal. It uses course files to organise materials related to each programme and it keeps records of lesson plans. Senior managers undertake monthly checks to ensure that staff keep these files up to date. It would be **desirable** for the College to develop a single teaching and learning strategy that aligns with Part B: 'Assuring and enhancing academic quality', *Chapter B3: Learning and teaching* of the Quality Code.

2.6   The College has robust formative assessment. It has assessment responsibilities only for CMI courses. It has, however, adopted a formal internal testing system to support ICM and CIMA students in their preparation for the external exams. This consists of one assignment and one test per term. CMI students have tests as part of their assessments at the College. The results are analysed on a term and course basis. This is used to monitor student performance and identify any additional support needed. The monitoring of student performance through the introduction of formative tests and assessments for externally examined courses is **good practice**.

2.7   Feedback to students is timely and effective. Written feedback is provided on individual coursework within two weeks after submission. Tutors subsequently meet each student once a term to discuss their performance. At these meetings, a 'term report' is filled out by both tutor and student. These forms are used universally and the Academic Board undertakes regular checks to ensure they are kept up to date. Students are satisfied with the quality of feedback they receive.

2.8   Teaching staff performance is rigorously monitored through class observation, self-assessment and student feedback. Class observations are carried out by the Director Principal or the Principal, who subsequently provide feedback to tutors and recommend training where necessary. The results are fed into annual evaluations, which also include outcomes of tutor self-assessments. Students' feedback on lecturers is collected each term and analysed by the Academic Board. The results are then publically posted.

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

2.9   The College has a satisfactory one-day induction where students are welcomed and course requirements are explained. They receive an induction pack which includes information from awarding organisations about their course, term dates, the prospectus and student handbook. Students confirm that they were told about the National Health Service,

local banks and UK Border Agency requirements. The College also has a 'buddy system', whereby new students are introduced to existing ones.

2.10   Extensive academic support is provided to students in the form of class material, an open door policy and additional classes available on a needs basis. The need is usually established by tutors, but it is also requested by students themselves. Students have taken such classes in mathematics, English, finance, and business law. They also have one-to-one sessions with tutors where they discuss their test and assignment results. Students confirm that they appreciate this opportunity, which helps them understand how they can improve. The extensive individualised academic support is **good practice**.

2.11   The College has appropriate student support services. Pastoral support is provided by the Student Welfare Officer and a range of student services are available, including an annual social function, well attended career events and a student of the month award.

2.12   The College uses effectively a range of methods to ensure that students' views are heard. These include a suggestion box, a good administrative system and student feedback on lecturers. Student representation occurs through two student organisations, one of which sits in regular meetings with staff. All these routes provide students with a sound platform to express their views on anything that affects them, from learning resources to exam results and social events. Students unanimously confirmed their satisfaction with the way the College responds to their suggestions or requests.

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

2.13   The College provides adequate staff development, but they do not have a systematic staff development policy. All new staff are observed in class by the Director Principal during their three-month probation period. Senior managers are open to staff suggestions for continuing professional development (CPD) activities, and recent examples include external training in dyslexia observation, an Examination Officer training and in-house training for new teaching staff. It would be **desirable** for the College to implement a staff development policy that links to quarterly review.

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

2.14   The College ensures that learning resources are sufficient and accessible by responding to awarding organisation recommendations and student and staff requests. Examples include recently added books to the library, computers, a course toolkit and subscriptions to business journals. Students also use awarding organisations' websites and e-books.

2.15   Students are satisfied with their learning resources. The student written submission comments positively about laptops available on campus, the library resources and exam paper templates. Students are also satisfied with the virtual learning environment and other the electronic materials available on awarding organisations websites.

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

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3   Information about learning opportunities

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

3.1   The College produces an attractive prospectus and website which require improvement. They contain information on the College's history and its ethos. They copy content directly from awarding body documentation, but there is little description on how the College uses awarding organisation direction to deliver courses. Entry requirements are listed separately from course descriptions and there is no information on fees. There is also no information on the costs of studying and living in London. It would be **desirable** for the College to review its prospectus and website to align with Part C: 'Information about higher education provision' of the Quality Code.

3.2   Information given to students at enrolment is satisfactory. They receive an induction pack which includes the student handbook. The student written submission comments positively on both. Students are also given awarding organisation documentation relating to their chosen course, timetables, term dates and other necessary documentation, which they find provides a comprehensive framework for the start of the course.

3.3   In the previous term the College posted students' results in a public place for all students and others to see. It is **advisable** that the College ensure that the publication of students' results is in line with the *Data Protection Act 1998*.

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

3.4   The College has adequate arrangements for assuring that its information about learning opportunities is fit for purpose. The Vice Principal has overall responsibility. The College recently established a Planning and Policies Committee, which has operational responsibility for public information, including the website. It is chaired by the Principal with regular yearly meetings set for July and January. The Committee has met once. Students are also asked to comment on website accuracy. There is evidence of continuous checking by designated staff and this is monitored through the committee structure.

3.5   The College has recently developed a virtual learning environment and social media accounts that effectively support students in their learning. Staff upload material from awarding organisations and their own lecture materials to the virtual learning environment. Staff monitor student use of the virtual learning environment and this is followed up at the weekly staff meeting. Students find the virtual learning environment helpful in supporting their studies. The two social media networks enhance the social aspects of the provision and contain links to information regarding support for study. The accounts are managed by an administrator overseen by the Vice Principal.

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

Action plan[3]

Khalsa College London action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight June 2013						
Good practice	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
The review team identified the following areas of **good practice** that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:						
• the monitoring of student progress through the introduction of formative tests and assessments for externally examined courses (paragraph 2.6)	We will continue to develop this, through dialogue with students and external representatives, setting targets and objectives throughout the three academic terms, measuring their success as we progress	Termly review over the academic year with additional reference made in staff meetings	Staff and senior management	Good feedback, students appreciate that feedback allows them also the opportunity comment

To produce a document which summarises fully the individual student's progress which is agreed by staff and students | Course co-ordinators and Academic Board | Good feedback and productive result analysis which identify areas to be improved or maintained |
| the extensive individualised academic support (paragraph 2.10). | We will continue to develop this, through dialogue with students, broadening | Termly review over the academic | Staff and senior management | Students feel that teachers understand their needs and | Course co-ordinators | Good feedback with requests to maintain the support |

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

	the criteria to incorporate special needs, for example dyslexia awareness, resource support for needy students	year and in staff meetings		appreciate how work can be tailored to meet their individual requirements		
Advisable	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
The team considers that it is **advisable** for the College to:						
• align its policies and procedures with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) and other relevant external reference points (paragraphs 1.7 and 1.8)	To review both the Quality Code and other external reference points approved/quoted by awarding bodies, this process has already started We have specifically timetabled meetings throughout the next academic year to discuss Chapters of the Quality Code with all staff, highlighting headings to specific staff Staff already have an overview of its contents but this will be a more formalised	Spring and summer terms 2014	Academic Board and Senior Management	Greater clarity and understanding of Quality Code requirements and other reference points and how they can be merged into the day-to-day running of the College, to produce more effective policies and procedures	Academic Board	Success markers will be achieved through published analysis, which allows us to gain a greater understanding of areas that need to be developed Clearer reference in Policies Handbook and on website to Quality Code

communication of the objectives						
• ensure that publication of student results is in line with the *Data Protection Act 1998* (paragraphs 2.8 and 3.3).	Results procedure has been withdrawn	June 2013	Vice Principal	n/a	Academic Board	n/a
Desirable	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
The team considers that it is **desirable** for the College to:						
• produce course development plans based on the outcomes of the quarterly reviews (paragraphs 1.6 and 2.3)	Course co-ordinators will be asked to produce course development plans if required with awarding organisation input New forms and system will be completed over the summer The plans will be reviewed in the winter term to understand if the scheme is working and to allow for any changes to be made	Winter 2013	Senior Management and course co-ordinators	Greater understanding of why the courses are run and how they can be developed in future, which will help students understand the expectations from them and the College	Academic Board	Formulating course data in a more prescribed way will give pointers to future development of both teaching and course structure Results will be presented to Academic Board for comments and decisions

| develop a single teaching and learning strategy that aligns with Part B: 'Assuring and enhancing academic quality', *Chapter B3: Learning and teaching* of the Quality Code (paragraph 2.5) | Development of a Teaching and Learning Strategy is underway, through reference to the Quality Code and through review of other providers we have begun to establish a robust strategy

The College will be holding three awareness workshops through the next academic year for staff

This will incorporate awareness of the Quality Code, this will be achieved through Chapter dissemination of the Quality Code not just at the three points in the year but also at staff meetings | Spring 2014 | Senior Management in consultation with teachers | Teaching and Learning outcomes will become clearer, the practices will make reference to current laws, up-to-date professional practice and subject knowledge, assessment, external reference points giving us time to reflect and measure effectiveness through the success of the strategy and its alignment with the Quality Code | Academic Board and on completion back to teachers | Positive feedback from staff and students with a noticeable change in strategies across the board

Policy made to be published in Policy Handbook |
| implement a staff development policy that links to quarterly review (paragraph 2.13) | A staff development policy is being developed in consultation with staff and external | Winter 2013 | Vice Principal | Reassurance to staff and management team that policies and procedures | Academic Board | A staff development policy will ensure that staff feel secure in the |

	reference points			are linking and working well		knowledge that all areas are covered from assessment, continuous professional development through to observation and much more The policy will be published in the Policy Handbook with quarterly review taking place, staff and senior management can then check off that all criteria, old and new, are being met
• review its prospectus and website to align with Part C: 'Information about higher education provision' of the Quality Code (paragraph 3.1).	Vice Principal has already started redevelopment of the website to offer information on fees and more general information which will be of benefit to any students local and/or overseas Additionally, work has	Winter 2013	Academic Board has made a decision to review the website and prospectus	More interaction, more visitors, more social media awareness, easier navigation, current course content provider and Colleges updates	All Board members/staff	The website will be a continuous updating process, any comments received will be reviewed and evaluated

	started on developing pages which contain additional information on outcomes/ expectation external/internal reference points, teaching and learning methods and forms of assessment Academic Board has made a decision to publish fees on the website but not in the prospectus, as it is easier to make immediate changes on the website rather than having the prospectus reprinted, this will be highlighted in the prospectus and a link given to the website				

About QAA

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

QAA's aims are to:

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

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

More information about the work of QAA is available at: www.qaa.ac.uk.

More detail about Review for Educational Oversight can be found at: www.qaa.ac.uk/educational-oversight.

Glossary

This glossary explains terms used in this report. You can find a fuller glossary at: www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary. Formal definitions of key terms can be found in the *Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook.*[4]

Academic Infrastructure The core guidance developed and maintained by QAA in partnership with the UK higher education community and used by QAA and higher education providers until 2011-12 for quality assurance of UK higher education. It has since been replaced by the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (**Quality Code**).

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

academic standards The standards set and maintained by higher education providers for their courses and expected for their awards. See also **threshold academic standards**.

awarding body A UK higher education provider (typically a university) with the authority to award academic qualifications located on the **framework for higher education qualifications**, such as diplomas or degrees.

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

Code of practice *The Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education*, published by QAA: a set of interrelated documents giving guidance for higher education institutions which formed the core element of the **Academic Infrastructure** (now superseded by the **Quality Code**).

designated body An organisation that has been formally appointed or recognised to perform a particular function. QAA has been recognised by UKBA as a designated body for the purpose of providing educational oversight.

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

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

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

framework 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.*

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

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

learning opportunities The provision made for students' learning, including planned study, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, resources, and specialist facilities (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, which establishes exactly what QAA means when using it in reviews and reports.

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

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

provider A UK degree-awarding body or any other organisation that offers courses of higher education on behalf of a separate **awarding body** or **organisation**. In the context of REO, the term means an independent college.

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

Quality Code Short term for the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which is being developed from 2011 to replace the **Academic Infrastructure** and will incorporate all its key elements along with additional topics and overarching themes.

reference points Statements and other publications that establish criteria against which performance can be measured. Internal reference points may be used by providers for purposes of self-regulation; external ones are used and accepted throughout the higher education community for the checking of standards and quality.

quality See **academic quality**

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

threshold academic standards The minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for an academic award. Threshold academic standards are set out in the national qualifications frameworks and **subject benchmark statements**. See also **academic standards**.

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