



SAE Institute UK

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

June 2012

Key findings about SAE Institute UK

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in June 2012, the QAA review team (the team) considers that there can be **confidence** in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of Middlesex University.

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

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

Good practice

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

- the strong and collegial relationship with Middlesex University supports the management of academic standards on a cross-campus basis (paragraph 1.1)
- the procedures for programme monitoring, validation and review, including specialist creative media industries advice, enhance the vocational and professional dimensions of the programmes (paragraph 1.6)
- assessment guidelines are clear and concise, and designed to support students to understand the objectives of the assigned assignments (paragraph 2.9)
- systematic attention to teaching observation and to student feedback successfully enhances teaching and learning (paragraph 2.10)
- well-established Institute procedures and professional links effectively support students' work placements (paragraph 2.13)
- extensive use of electronic and social media ensures effective communication with students and staff (paragraph 3.4).

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:

- bring its policies and procedures together in a single, revised Quality Handbook, and publish them in a format which is accessible and user-friendly for all staff and students (paragraph 1.4)
- ensure that the planned improvements to the student management information system are implemented as soon as possible to fully safeguard the standards of awards (paragraph 1.11).

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

- consider and develop more rigorous ways of recruiting teaching staff (paragraph 2.6).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)¹ (REO) conducted by QAA at SAE Institute UK (the Institute). The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the provider discharges its stated responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes of study that the provider delivers on behalf of Middlesex University. The review was carried out by Dr Elizabeth Briggs, Dr Brian Giddings, Mr Haiyath Qureshi (reviewers), and Dr David Taylor (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:

- policy documents
- meetings with staff, students and a representative from Middlesex University
- QAA report on Middlesex University collaborative provision
- information on the provider's management processes and policies, minutes of meetings and quality assurance procedures
- publications for staff and students
- course documentation supplied by the Institute
- external verifiers' and validation reports
- samples of assessed work.

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

- Middlesex University policies for collaborative provision
- *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*
- the Academic Infrastructure.

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

SAE Institute was founded in Australia in 1976 and now has over 50 centres across the world, organised into regional or country groups for administrative and regulatory purposes. The campuses in the UK form one such group. The focus of all the SAE Institute campuses in the UK is on higher education programmes related to digital media technologies. SAE Institute was taken over by Navitas Ltd in 2011, a change of ownership that is not intended to lead to major changes in the academic profile of the Institute. The Institute began operations in London in 1985 and currently operates four campuses, located in London, Oxford, Liverpool and Glasgow.

SAE Institute has offered degree programmes in the UK and elsewhere in partnership with Middlesex University since 1997. In 2010, it was granted powers of institutional accreditation in respect of its undergraduate programmes, a status that implies a substantially greater delegation of authority than had previously been the case. The Institute is currently authorised to validate, monitor and review undergraduate programmes leading to Middlesex University awards, subject to the overarching responsibility of the University for the quality of the awards. In 2011 The Institute was recognised by Middlesex University as a Special Associate College.

¹ www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/tier-4.

² www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx.

The Institute's flagship campus in London operates from two buildings in east London, each equipped with industry-standard equipment. The Oxford campus is co-located with the Institute's central offices in a newly acquired building, and a new building for the Glasgow campus is at an advanced planning stage. A total of 584 students are enrolled on five BA/BSc programmes: 342 in London, 90 in Oxford, 77 in Glasgow and 75 in Liverpool (where students were first enrolled in November 2011).

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

Middlesex University

- BA/BSc (Hons) Audio Production
- BA/BSc (Hons) Digital Film Making
- BA/BSc (Hons) Web Development
- BA/BSc (Hons) Interactive Animation
- BSc (Hons) Games Programming
- MA/MSc Professional Practice (Creative Media Industries)

The Audio Production programme is available on all campuses, and the Digital Film Making programme at London, Oxford and Glasgow. The other three undergraduate programmes are only available at the London campus. All degree programmes are offered in intensive mode over two, rather than three, years. The BA/MA degree is awarded to candidates whose interests are primarily on the creative side and the BSc/MSc to those with primarily technical interests. The decision on which title to use is made by the Institute on the basis of the candidate's final project proposal. The MA/MSc degree is delivered online on a global basis. It is validated by Middlesex University through the latter's Institute for Work Based Learning and is not covered by the Accreditation or Special Associate College agreements.

The provider's stated responsibilities

The Institute's long relationship with Middlesex University is currently governed by an overarching partnership agreement, last renewed in 2009, which applies to all SAE Institute campuses in Europe and elsewhere that offer Middlesex University programmes, and a separate agreement, brought into force in September 2011, which gives the Institute Special Associate College status within the UK. An Instrument of Accreditation, which took effect in 2010, gives the Institute responsibility, within overall guidelines and regulations set by the University, for curriculum development, recruitment of students, marking and moderation of assignments, and chairing of assessment boards.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on higher education programmes at the provider were invited to present a submission to the review team. Students from London, Glasgow and Oxford took advantage of this opportunity and each submitted a DVD presentation, which demonstrated a high degree of engagement with the process. The Institute's role was limited to technical advice. The reviewers met a large group of students during the visit, with representatives from all campuses and programmes.

Detailed findings about SAE Institute UK

1 Academic standards

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

1.1 Quality assurance processes at all the campuses of the Institute are managed effectively in accordance with the requirements of the Middlesex University Memorandum of Cooperation (2009), a Partnership Agreement (2009), and an Accreditation Agreement (2010) covering undergraduate programmes. The relationship with Middlesex University has clearly been a long and fruitful one. Management of academic standards, including assessment, marking and moderation, are delegated to the Institute, working closely with the University Accreditation Tutor (who is the University Head of Quality) and within an overarching regulatory framework defined by the University. The staff who met the review team confirmed the considerable strength of support and guidance offered by University subject link tutors to programme teams across all campuses, particularly on assessment, academic regulations and specific curriculum development issues. The strong and collegial relationship with Middlesex University in support of the management of academic standards on a cross-campus basis represents good practice.

1.2 The Institute has a well-articulated management structure for academic standards. Campus academic coordinators at each campus report to the UK Academic Coordinator, who in turn reports to the Senior Academic Coordinator, based in London but with global responsibilities. Together, they are expected to ensure compliance with SAE Institute and Middlesex University's regulations and procedures, and the team saw substantial evidence that these tasks are effectively fulfilled. At programme level, programme leaders provide cross-campus leadership to ensure the quality and consistency of delivery of the provision and the maintenance and enhancement of standards.

1.3 The Institute benefits from being part of a global institution. The Senior Academic Coordinator is a member of SAE Institute's International Standards and Quality Committee, which exercises overall oversight of academic standards. This Committee acts as a forum where senior leaders share good practice and debate quality processes. It has specific responsibilities to ensure that the Institute's responsibilities to Middlesex University are fulfilled.

1.4 At the time of the visit, the Institute was reviewing its Quality Handbook in accordance with its strategic priorities for the 2010-14 period. While the Institute already has comprehensive policies and procedures for managing standards, the team considered that it is advisable for these to be brought together in a single, revised Quality Handbook, and published in a format which is accessible and user-friendly for all staff and students.

1.5 The Institute has a well-established and effective quality cycle. External examiners are appointed by Middlesex University, and the Institute makes formal responses through the National Academic Coordinator. Reports are shared with Boards of Studies for each programme on a campus basis. Students are represented on these Boards. The reports, together with Boards of Studies' comments, are then included in the annual monitoring report that is submitted to Middlesex University.

1.6 Programme review and validation is organised by the Institute under the terms of its Accreditation Agreement with Middlesex University. Reviews take place on a six-year cycle. Mid-cycle reviews can also be held in case major changes are proposed or there have been issues raised by an external examiner's report. External assessors and advisers are involved

in programme validation and review to ensure the currency of industry relevance. This is facilitated by the location of the Institute campuses in areas near the production facilities of major media houses, for example Hoxton and Silicon Roundabout in London, and by the extensive professional networks of many of the academic staff. Minor curriculum changes can be approved by the Institute in consultation with link tutors. The team considered the procedures for programme monitoring, validation and review, including specialist creative media industries advice, to be good practice, which enhances the vocational and professional dimensions of the programmes.

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

1.7 All programmes delivered by the Institute align with the Academic Infrastructure, and the team saw supporting evidence that the Institute manages academic standards in full accordance with precepts of the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code of practice*) relating to external examining, assessment of students, and programme validation, monitoring and review. The University Accreditation Tutor provides guidance to the Institute on the Academic Infrastructure, including *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* and the *Code of practice*. Programme specifications are subject benchmarked.

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

1.8 The University has responsibility for external examiners and their appointment; annual reports from external examiners are submitted to the University. As part of its move to accredited status, the Institute has recently taken over responsibility for assessment boards. The UK External Examiner acts as Chief External Examiner for SAE Institute centres worldwide to ensure an overview of standards and consistency. The team saw examples of the way in which external examiners' comments are responded to by programme teams, considered by Boards of Studies, and incorporated in action plans in annual monitoring reports.

1.9 Assessments are overseen by campus academic coordinators, following the requirements of the Institute's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy. Once assessments have been marked and moderated, they are reviewed during assessment panel meetings which take place quarterly. Assessment boards, which follow meetings of the assessment panels, are chaired by senior Institute staff with local external examiners present, using SAE procedures and regulations approved by Middlesex University.

1.10 Assignments and the final-year project are assessed and moderated across all four UK campuses, and checked by plagiarism detection software. There are clear processes for the marking of assignments to comprehensive marking schemes, appropriate to the intended learning outcomes, and for moderation of marking. Final year projects are double-blind marked. All other level 5 and level 6 assignments are subject to cross-campus moderation. These procedures are rigorous and conducted in a manner which secures the delivery of academic standards.

1.11 Campus Boards of Studies receive the annual programme monitoring report and the external examiner's report, which includes an action plan. Annual monitoring reports contain statistical data and evaluation of retention, progression, module grades and degree classifications, as well as first destinations. While there are some inherent difficulties in managing accurate programme data, with the compressed structure of three years study into two, different entry points and student mobility from campus to campus, the team concurred

with the view of the external examiner that full statistical data should be routinely available to assessment panels. Recent assessment panels have received more statistical information in response to this request. However, senior staff agreed that problems remain, and the Institute has begun to address this issue by developing a new, customised student management information system. It is advisable to ensure that the planned improvements to this information system are implemented as soon as possible to fully safeguard the standards of awards.

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

2 Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1 The Institute's management structures and procedures, described in paragraphs 1.1 and 1.2, operate effectively to maintain and enhance the quality of learning opportunities at programme and institutional levels. The management of the quality of learning opportunities is delegated to the Institute by Middlesex University and the Institute meets its responsibilities through the completion of annual monitoring reports and formulation of action plans. Recommendations from external examiners also play a key role in monitoring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities.

2.2 The roles and responsibilities of the Senior Academic Coordinator, National Academic Coordinator, and programme and campus coordinators are clearly defined so as to ensure that the quality of learning is monitored and enhancements identified in accordance with the Middlesex University accreditation agreement. The National Academic Coordinator reviews progress on action plan points, and students who sit on the Boards of Studies are able to comment on these and other quality of learning issues.

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

2.3 At senior management level, there is a high level of awareness of the Academic Infrastructure as it relates to the quality of learning outcomes. Staff have a clear understanding of the Academic Infrastructure and are expected to utilise subject benchmark statements when developing programmes and assignments. The University subject link tutors provide guidance to the Institute on the Academic Infrastructure, including the *Code of practice*. Programme specifications are subject benchmarked and made available through programme handbooks. Students confirm that they receive clear guidance on intended learning outcomes and grading criteria, procedures for complaints and appeals, and penalties for late submission and academic misconduct. They also confirm that they are studying programmes which are appropriate for their previous qualifications; mature students, with prior experiential learning, were also satisfied with their progression opportunities. There is clear evidence from the annual monitoring reports, confirmed by the students themselves, that the Institute responds effectively to student feedback.

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

2.4 The Institute has effective measures to assure and enhance the quality of teaching and learning. Staff are well qualified, with most having postgraduate qualifications and professional experience, and some having doctorates. All staff, including visiting lecturers, are provided with a comprehensive manual to familiarise themselves with the policies, operation and administration of the programme at an early stage in order to ensure consistency and clarity of programme management. The Institute supports its staff to gain teaching or more advanced professional and academic qualifications.

2.5 A range of teaching and learning methods is used. Input from industry professionals, together with the staff's own professional experience, ensures that course content reflects current industry practice. The effectiveness of teaching and learning is measured in a number of ways. These include feedback completed by students, well-documented formal tutorial feedback and external examiners' reports. Annual monitoring reports include reflection on the effectiveness of teaching and learning, and identified improvements are implemented. Student representatives sit on the Institute's Boards of Studies, and senior management carefully considers issues raised by students at scheduled student representative meetings, in regular student surveys, and at the Boards of Studies. Student feedback clearly informs ongoing enhancements to learning opportunities.

2.6 Students reported to the team that they are mostly satisfied with the quality of teaching. However, the Institute acknowledges that there have been instances of poor quality teaching. While the team saw evidence that prompt remedial action was taken in such cases, it also considers that strategies for recruiting teaching staff are not sufficiently rigorous. Additionally, there is no overarching process to ensure the consistency of monitoring new teaching staff. The team considers it desirable that the Institute develops more rigorous ways of recruiting teaching staff.

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

2.7 The Institute has strategies to ensure that students are supported effectively. On enrolment, students receive a comprehensive enrolment pack and Student Handbook, which provide essential information and explain teaching, learning and assessment arrangements. Students also receive a USB flash drive which includes all essential information; the same material is available in the student portal for further guidance. An induction event provides students with clear guidance on programme expectations and entitlements, including support in English language and study skills. Librarian/Support Officers at the London, Oxford and Glasgow campuses provides extensive study skills support. Students report that they feel well supported by staff and could contact them easily.

2.8 Considerable careers guidance is given to students, both formally and informally. Information about employment opportunities is made available electronically and via the Institute's own magazine. The Institute provides a number of opportunities for students to work together on community projects and to become engaged with other institutions, such as the Institute of Contemporary Music Performance, thus enhancing students' practical skills and employability. It is also a partner with Middlesex University in the Middlesex Skillset Media Academy, in turn part of a national network that brings together colleges and universities across the UK.

2.9 Assessment of student work is carried out with considerable care. Students report that they are adequately briefed on what is expected from each assignment and are generally satisfied with the feedback they receive on their work. This is confirmed by external examiners' reports. Students receive clear and concise assessment guidelines that are

designed to help them to understand the objectives of their assignments. Students also receive full and constructive written feedback for each assignment, including assessors' comments and internal verifiers' statements. This level of support represents good practice.

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

2.10 A formal teaching observation scheme has been implemented at the Institute, and there is also a peer review scheme managed by a senior member of staff. Staff on the Audio Production programme, for example, reported that they observe each other's teaching to help develop their own teaching practice. A peer review process provides a more structured opportunity for staff to observe each other's teaching, and discuss methodologies and student engagement. Staff are expected to develop their teaching strategies through reflecting and responding both on feedback from student surveys and from external examiners. Based on annual reviews conducted by senior staff, formal action plans are drawn up for individual lecturers to enhance their performance, and these are supported by the Institute through internal training courses and by facilitating attendance at external events through leave of absence and financial support. The systematic attention to staff development by the Institute successfully enhances teaching and learning, and is good practice.

2.11 Staff members attend conferences and report back to the staff team at in-house events. Senior staff members encourage teaching staff to take up development opportunities. A register of staff development activity is maintained at the local campus level by the campus manager.

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

2.12 Arrangements to ensure that appropriate resources are available and accessible to students are currently adequate. Each campus includes industry-standard technical facilities that prepare students for immediate entry into the workplace. Students are able to access resources from Middlesex University library, but they did not appear to be fully aware of this facility. Formal student feedback on resources is gathered through questionnaires and is discussed at staff meetings.

2.13 There are well-established procedures for the support of work-based learning, which feature on a number of programmes. The Institute has well-developed links with the professions which support opportunities for work-based learning. Students report very favourably on the support they receive at every level of the placement process. The team concludes that the well-established Institute procedures and professional links effectively support student work placements and constitute good practice.

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

3 Public information

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

3.1 Prospective students are able to make informed choices based on the marketing materials provided. A package (including prospectus, SAE Magazine, application form, and fees and funding form) is sent out in response to each enquiry and, where possible, students are given the opportunity to tour the Institute and talk to staff. Frequently held open days are also used to raise awareness of the courses and facilities available.

3.2 Course information is presented in such a way that students are aware of regulations, assessment requirements and are able to use this information to gain benefit from the course. Suitable information is provided upon initial enquiry and at enrolment including digital copies of the programme handbook, Student Handbook, SAE Institute regulations, assignment guidelines and schedule of deadlines. Lecture schedules are available via online calendars and learning materials are made available on the student portal after the delivery of each lecture. Students reported that the information supplied was appropriate and useful.

3.3 Measures are in place to ensure that international students receive up-to-date and reliable information, and that only those applicants who have suitable skills are recruited. Agents are given appropriate training and are required to operate within clear guidelines. In some cases, they have the opportunity to visit the Institute campuses. This ensures that international students with suitable skills are enrolled onto courses. A member of staff at the Institute provides advice and assistance to all UK campuses on the enrolment of international students.

3.4 The current development of staff and student portals will further improve internal communications and the availability of information. Following trials, the student portal will shortly be opened up to all students and this is intended to make public information, such as external examiners' reports, readily accessible. The student portal is available at each site via the web, mobile or tablet, and covers a full range of relevant topics, including assignment guidelines, lecture notes and resources. The staff portal covers policies, quality and improving teaching. Further support of students occurs through the SAE Magazine and newsletters. The SAE Magazine, which is issued quarterly, has global coverage and is relevant to students, alumni and others within the industry. The Institute makes effective use of the full range of electronically based media, including social media, to communicate with its staff and students, and this is an area of good practice.

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

3.5 Responsibilities for monitoring and updating public information in printed and electronic formats are clear. Overall responsibility is in the hands of the senior and national academic coordinators, who work with campus managers and academic coordinators to ensure that information is accurate and up to date. The relationship, through the Accreditation Tutor, with Middlesex University ensures that information aligns with Middlesex University guidelines.

3.6 The Institute actively seeks student feedback and responds appropriately. Student feedback is collected via online end-of-module questionnaires, monthly meetings involving student representatives and involvement of students on the Boards of Studies. Students confirmed that they receive clear guidance in their handbooks on intended learning

outcomes and grading criteria, procedures for complaints and appeals, and penalties for late submission and academic misconduct.

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

Action plan³

| SAE Institute UK action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight June 2012 | | | | | | |
|--|--|-------------|---|--|----------------------------------|--|
| 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 provider: | | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the strong and collegial relationship with Middlesex University supports the management of academic standards on a cross-campus basis (paragraph 1.1) | Continue regular liaison and operational meetings with key staff from both SAE Institute UK and Middlesex University to further strengthen the relationship; evaluate agreement implementation | June 2013 | Head of Academic Quality (Middlesex University) Senior Academic Coordinator (SAE Institute UK) | Regular meetings cycle; streamlined procedures for student registrations, student services and quality management | SAE Director of Academic Affairs | Via the Academic Advisory Committee to the International Standards and Quality Commission |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the procedures for programme monitoring, validation and review, including specialist creative media industries advice, enhance the vocational and professional dimensions of the | Identify suitable academic and industry professionals to create a more formal SAE Academic Advisory Committee | March 2013 | National Academic Coordinator | Formal cycles of the Academic Advisory Committee Ensuring the approved programmes remain relevant and current | Senior Academic Coordinator | Minutes from the Academic Advisory Commission committee meetings together with actions to the International Standards Quality Commission |

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

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|--|--|--|---|--|-------------------------------|--|
| programmes (paragraph 1.6) | | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> assessment guidelines are clear and concise, and designed to support students to understand the objectives of the assigned assignments (paragraph 2.9) | Ensure that new assignment guidelines are relevant and easy to understand | Ongoing with first target date December 2012 | National Academic Coordinator | Academic Advisory Commission to verify relevance of assignments to the industry Students to verify usability of the assignment guidelines | Senior Academic Coordinator | Via student feedback in line with Policy G04 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> systematic attention to teaching observation and to student feedback successfully enhances teaching and learning (paragraph 2.10) | Ensure consistency of teaching observation processes in all four campuses | October 2013 | Campus academic coordinators | All four campuses synchronised in teaching observation cycle and feedback from students | National Academic Coordinator | Via annual monitoring report |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> well-established Institute procedures and professional links effectively support students' work placements (paragraph 2.13) | Create a database of work-related projects and placements for each programme | June 2013 | Programme coordinators and programme leaders | Integrate database into the staff portal | National Academic Coordinator | Staff survey to determine effectiveness of database in supporting students |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> extensive use of electronic and social media ensures effective communication with students and staff (paragraph 3.4). | Continue to populate both staff and student portals Consolidate all information platforms for students into one | June 2013 | Managing Director, SAE Institute UK and programme leaders | Monitor usage statistics | National Academic Coordinator | Relevant student and staff survey feedback |

| Advisable | Action to be taken | Target date | Action by | Success indicators | Reported to | Evaluation |
|---|---|--------------------|---|---|------------------------------|--|
| The team considers that it is advisable for the provider to: | | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> bring its policies and procedures together in a single, revised Quality Handbook, and publish them in a format which is accessible and user-friendly for all staff and students (paragraph 1.4) | Annually produce an updated Quality Handbook | December 2012 | National Academic Coordinator | Available on staff and student portals in relevant, accessible and user-friendly format | Senior Academic Coordinator | Staff and student feedback |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that the planned improvements to the student management information system are implemented as soon as possible to fully safeguard the standards of awards (paragraph 1.11). | Continue to actively contribute to the development of the new Navitas and SAE student management information system | August 2013 | Managing Director SAE-UK; National Academic Coordinator; Navitas (parent company of SAE); SAE Institute UK Information Technology staff | Successful implementation of new student management information system | Director of Academic Affairs | Progress reports and pilot evaluation by December 2013 |
| Desirable | Action to be taken | Target date | Action by | Success indicators | Reported to | Evaluation |
| The team considers that it is desirable for the provider to: | | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> consider and develop more rigorous ways of recruiting teaching | Review teaching staff recruitment and selection strategies and induction | July 2013 | National Academic Coordinator; Senior Academic | New staff recruitment, selection and induction policies | Director of Academic Affairs | Feedback from appointment panels, from new teaching staff, |

| | | | | | | |
|------------------------|--|--|---|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| staff (paragraph 2.6). | procedures; produce recommendations for improvement; implement recommendations | | Coordinator; and Managing Director SAE Institute UK | by 31/12/2012; implementation reviewed by 30/06/2013 | | from programme leaders and students |
|------------------------|--|--|---|--|--|-------------------------------------|

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/institutionreports/types-of-review/tier-4.

Glossary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

framework for higher education qualifications A published formal structure that identifies a hierarchy of national qualification levels and describes the general achievement expected of holders of the main qualification types at each level, thus assisting higher education providers in maintaining academic standards. QAA publishes the following frameworks:

⁴ www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx.

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

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

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

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

operational definition A formal definition of a term, which establishes exactly what QAA means when using it in reports.

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

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

provider An institution that offers courses of higher education, typically on behalf of a separate **awarding body or organisation**. In the context of REO, the term means an independent Institute.

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

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

quality See **academic quality**.

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

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

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

RG 1030 09/12

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

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