



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

## The Sherwood Psychotherapy Training Institute Ltd

May 2014

### Contents

<b>Key findings about The Sherwood Psychotherapy Training Institute Ltd .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Good practice .....	1
Recommendations .....	1
<b>About this report.....</b>	<b>2</b>
The provider's stated responsibilities.....	3
Recent developments .....	3
Students' contribution to the review.....	3
<b>Detailed findings about Sherwood Psychotherapy Training Institute Ltd .....</b>	<b>4</b>
1 Academic standards.....	4
2 Quality of learning opportunities .....	6
3 Information about learning opportunities.....	9
<b>Action plan .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>About QAA .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Glossary .....</b>	<b>24</b>

## Key findings about The Sherwood Psychotherapy Training Institute Ltd

As a result of its Review for Specific Course Designation carried out in May 2014, the QAA review team (the team) considers that there can be **confidence** in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the standards of the programmes it offers on behalf of Coventry 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 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 clear and succinct FAQ booklet 2014 that provides a single source for key information (paragraph 2.10)
- the part-time teaching pattern that links clinical placements to academic reflection (paragraph 2.17).

### 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:

- enter into a new partnership agreement with an awarding body to ensure the continuity of its higher education programmes (paragraph 1.1)
- map its policies and procedures to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education's expectations and indicators (paragraph 1.7).

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

- collate all its policies into one central quality assurance manual (paragraph 1.4)
- monitor the shortfall in clinical placement hours and strengthen its resources for finding placements (paragraph 1.9)
- further develop formalised teaching observations of all teaching staff to support dissemination and sharing of good practice (paragraph 2.7)
- continue to develop a process for statistical analysis of key data sets to improve information for students (paragraph 3.1)
- consider developing the virtual learning environment to create more interactive learning experiences (paragraph 3.3)
- develop more proactive opportunities for students to comment on the quality of information (paragraph 3.7).

## About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Specific Course Designation](#)<sup>1</sup> conducted by [QAA](#) at The Sherwood Psychotherapy Training Institute Ltd (the Institute), 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 Coventry University. The review was carried out by Ms Brenda Eade, Mr Gary Hargreaves, Mr Peter Ptashko (Reviewers) and Professor Patricia Higham (Coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the [Review for Educational Oversight \(and for specific course designation\): Handbook, April 2013](#)<sup>2</sup>. Evidence in support of the review included documentation supplied by the provider and its awarding body, and meetings with staff, awarding body representatives, and students.

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

- the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code)
- the awarding body's guidelines and requirements
- professional bodies' requirements for professional accreditation and non-statutory registration
- National Qualifications Framework (NQF)
- *the Framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ).

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

The Institute, established in 1987 as a specialist provider of both academically validated and professionally recognised courses in counselling and psychotherapy, is based in two historic buildings near Nottingham Castle. Currently the Institute offers a part-time undergraduate degree and two part-time master's degrees in psychotherapy and counselling.

The Institute is a training and accrediting member of the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) and has also established an accreditation relationship with the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). Its awarding body is Coventry University. Higher education student numbers currently enrolled with Coventry University total 159.

At the time of the review, the Institute offered the following part-time higher education programmes, listed beneath their awarding body with enrolled student numbers in brackets:

### Coventry University

- BSc (Hons) in Counselling and Psychotherapy (82)
- MSc in Integrative Psychotherapy (43)
- MSc in Person-Centred Psychotherapy and Counselling (34)

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<sup>1</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/RSCD.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/RSCD.aspx)

<sup>2</sup> At the time of publication of this report, the Handbook has been republished as *Review for Specific Course Designation: Handbook, May 2014*, available at [www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2707](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2707)

## **The provider's stated responsibilities**

The Institute is responsible for identifying curriculum needs and curriculum development, teaching and assessment, student recruitment, monitoring and support, public information, and for undertaking quality assurance and staff development. The Institute shares responsibilities with Coventry University for the quality review of higher education provision; library and learning resources available to students; monitoring the quality of teaching and learning; monitoring student admission, retention and completion; and reviewing and responding to annual monitoring reviews and module evaluations.

## **Recent developments**

The range of courses provided has remained stable for the past three years. The Institute is currently searching for a new awarding body; Coventry University recently stated that it intends to withdraw from its validating role because of a change in strategic direction. The Institute has made a number of appointments to enhance administrative support, and has increased its information technology support to administrative and teaching staff and to students. The Institute increased its investment in library resources, and in its physical resources. A significant development is the increased recruitment to preparatory level 2 and foundation courses that provide bridges to the degrees.

## **Students' contribution to the review**

Students studying on higher education programmes at the Institute conducted a student survey and met together to collate the results and write a student submission which they presented to the review team. The students were assisted by a project manager at the Institute. During the review, a group of students met with the review team, and another group of students met with the review coordinator at the preparatory meeting. The students' views informed the team's decision-making.

## Detailed findings about The Sherwood Psychotherapy Training Institute Ltd

### 1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The Institute's partnership with Coventry University (the University) for validated programmes at postgraduate and undergraduate levels began in 2008. However, the University has indicated it will not renew the partnership and the final intake of students to the undergraduate programmes and transfer of students from the foundation year to the master's programme will be in September 2014. The University expects all students to be transferred to a new partner by September 2016. The Institute is in consultation with several other universities to secure a new awarding body but these negotiations are at an early stage. It is **advisable** that the Institute enter into a new partnership agreement with an awarding body to ensure the continuity of its higher education programmes.

1.2 Management of academic standards is shared effectively between the Institute and the University. Under the collaborative agreement with the University, the Institute is responsible for the curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment. The Institute manages the programmes and examination boards effectively. The University ensures that standards are maintained as part of the partnership agreement. The University approves external examiners' appointments. The Institute submits annual quality monitoring reports that clearly analyse student recruitment, achievement and progression. These reports, written by the Director of Training in consultation with programme leaders, include external examiner comments, the outcomes of student feedback and identify actions to be taken. A University link tutor, who is the first point of contact between the Institute and the University, attends examination boards and meets once a term with the Director of Training; Director of Finance, Marketing and Recruitment; and programme leaders. The link tutor also attends the Combined Programme Committee meetings to review and evaluate the effectiveness of programme delivery.

1.3 The Director of Training maintains effective oversight of academic standards. The five programme leaders, who report directly to her, effectively manage and monitor standards at operational level. They take responsibility for programme teaching, learning and assessment, manage the teaching staff and oversee assessment processes. The two Directors, the programme leaders and teaching staff maintain clear lines of communication. Although the programme leaders and teaching staff are employed on part-time contracts, communication is managed effectively when staff members are not present at the Institute through email, internet messaging and telephone.

1.4 To assist in the management of standards, the Institute administers a range of policies and procedures based on those of the University. A detailed admissions policy includes accreditation of prior learning and consistently applies relevant entry requirements. The assessment policy provides clear guidelines for setting assessments. Detailed guidance on marking, moderation and submission procedures is contained in a separate document - *Marking Criteria*. These and other policies are included in student and staff handbooks, but are not collated into one coherent quality assurance manual. The Institute frequently has to update its policies, and recognises that consistency could be more easily assured if all its policies are contained in one central document. It would be **desirable** for the Institute to collate all its policies into one central quality assurance manual.

1.5 The Institute's robust committee structure designates clear terms of reference for each committee. Overall responsibility for management of standards lies with the Directors Committee which meets once a month. The Senior Management Team, which includes the Directors and programme leaders, also meets monthly and discusses issues raised at staff and student meetings. Combined Programme Committee meetings are held biannually. Students are represented on the Combined Programme Committee and also attend student meetings after each teaching. Minutes of committee meetings provide an audit trail for actions to be taken. Actions are followed up at subsequent meetings and decisions disseminated to students and staff via the virtual learning environment (VLE).

### **How effectively does the Institute make use of external reference points to manage academic standards?**

1.6 The Institute uses effectively two professional bodies, the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) and the British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy (BACP), as external reference points to ensure that it maintains professional standards. The Institute has been a UKCP training and accrediting member since 1993. Its UKCP quinquennial review took place in March 2014. The review report is yet to be published, but initial feedback is positive. The Institute has a representative at UKCP which enables the Institute to contribute to standard setting and to keep up to date with new developments. BACP accredits the BSc programme and will review it in 2014-15. Institute staff members attend and contribute to BACP teaching and research conferences. Accreditation by UKCP and BACP enables students to register with the appropriate professional body after completion of their programme. The University acts as a further external reference point to ensure that standards are maintained in accordance with FHEQ expectations.

1.7 The Institute has not fully engaged with the Quality Code. The Quality Code's expectations are not referenced in its policies and procedures. Staff members have some understanding of Quality Code expectations, but have not received relevant training and are not fully aware of how they can use the Quality Code to enhance their teaching and assessment. It is **advisable** that the Institute map its policies and procedures to the Quality Code's expectations and indicators.

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

1.8 The Institute has a well-established system for considering student achievement and progression at annual examination boards. Decisions relating to student performance are minuted clearly. The Institute has a rigorous process for first and second marking of student work. Following comments from external examiners, second markers now blind mark all work. External examiners attend examination boards, confirm the marks awarded, and mediate where internal markers cannot agree on a mark for a particular piece of assessment. They make verbal comments to which programme leaders respond.

1.9 External examiner reports are generally positive and indicate that the Institute responds effectively to issues raised. However, some critical comments have been made about the numbers of students with shortfalls in clinical hours that delay their progression to the next stage or their completion of the programme. The Institute has attempted to address this issue by improving information about placements and requiring students to have Disclosure and Barring Service checks when they join the Institute so they will be ready to undertake placements without delays caused by uncompleted checks. It would be **desirable** for the Institute to monitor the shortfall in clinical placement hours and strengthen its resources for finding placements.

1.10 In summary, the Institute and its current awarding body, Coventry University, effectively share the management of academic standards, but the partnership agreement will not be renewed. Management and committee structures effectively support academic standards. The Institute's policies and procedures help to ensure maintenance of standards, but these would be more effective if they were contained in one quality assurance manual. The Institute effectively uses the University and two professional bodies as external reference points, but has yet to embed the Quality Code into its policies. Rigorous systems are in place to ensure that assessment processes are completed fairly. Examination boards effectively monitor student achievement and progression. External examiner reports are generally positive, but concerns have been raised regarding shortfalls in clinical hours. The Institute is recommended to establish a new collaborative partner, collate its policies into one quality assurance manual, embed the Quality Code into its policies, and monitor the shortfall in clinical placement hours and strengthen its resources for finding placements.

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

## 2 Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1 The Institute's organisational chart clearly defines responsibilities for the quality of learning opportunities. Roles are delineated at four levels: directors and company owners; administrators; programme leaders; and teaching teams, which include tutors. The Director of Training, in consultation with programme leaders, is responsible for programme development. Management of learning opportunities also takes place at deliberative programme team meetings, monthly programme leader meetings, Combined Programme Committees and through formal and informal student feedback. The Combined Programme Committee, whose members include staff, students and the University link tutor, ensures effectively that regular contributions are made to support change.

2.2 Programme modifications are made in consultation with the University link tutor before approval by the relevant University board. Recent modifications sought introduction of exit awards for students not reaching the required clinical competence, and changes to award titles that reflect professional body requirements.

2.3 The Institute's mechanisms for enhancing its provision include regular standardised module evaluation forms, annual monitoring, and student feedback from all modules and workshops. These processes identify strengths and weaknesses and make recommendations. The Institute uses these processes to identify effectiveness and areas for improvement. Examples include extending the range of freely provided study guidance and information sheets, and providing study skills and academic skills at a small cost.

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

2.4 The Institute is aware of the Quality Code for managing and enhancing learning opportunities. Programme validations consider and embed subject benchmark statements in programme specifications, course literature, and student handbooks. The Institute takes account of the FHEQ. The FHEQ expectations for critical reflection at postgraduate levels are incorporated in student handbooks and information sheets, for example, *Critically Analysing a Research Paper* and *Critical Thinking*.

2.5 Assessment guidance and methods in programme specifications meet the expectations of Quality Code *Chapter B6: Assessment of students and the recognition of prior learning*. The Institute acts on external examiners' recommendations, for example, by including specialist reading materials as preparation for assessments, and by providing opportunities for student placement feedback. The Institute intends to upload external examiners' reports to its VLE. However, staff handbooks contain no guidance on assessment, and do not refer to the Quality Code.

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

2.6 Each programme explains its teaching and learning methods, but as noted in paragraph 1.4, the Institute lacks a coherent quality assurance manual that contains a formalised overarching teaching and learning strategy which refers to external reference points, teaching observations, feedback, evaluation, and the Institute's distinctive teaching, learning and assessment strategy. Quality assurance policies and procedures are dispersed in different documents. Student handbooks describe the teaching and learning strategies which are derived from programme specifications. The website further explains learning approaches.

2.7 The Institute gathers students' views on teaching and learning methods through workshop and end-of-module feedback and informal feedback (noted in paragraph 2.3). Staff and students reported that the quality of teaching was very good and assessment expectations were clear. Programme leaders monitor teaching, delivery and assessment material, and undertake formal observations of new teaching staff. Observations of experienced staff are regular but informal. It would be **desirable** for the Institute to further develop formalised teaching observations of all teaching staff to support dissemination and sharing of good practice.

2.8 The Institute's human resources system and professional body expectations comply with legal and professional requirements for recruitment and employment. Job descriptions outline responsibilities for teaching and learning. A teaching presentation forms part of the staff recruitment process. A recent recruitment drive to increase administrative and academic staffing enables staff to work within a capacity that allows swifter responses to students. A recently appointed administrator supports both staff and students.

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

2.9 The Marketing and Recruitment Coordinator responds to enquiries and applications from potential students, and organises information days. Two academic administrators provide support to students for enrolment, receipt and return of assessments. Administrators help staff to prepare for examination boards and to liaise with the University. The Directors' personal assistant helps with preparation of key meetings and events. An information technology consultant produces a comprehensive VLE user guide and offers support to staff and students.

2.10 Staff and student handbooks provide detailed information on programmes. At an operational level, the clear and succinct FAQ booklet 2014 that provides a single source for key information is **good practice**.

2.11 The University expects the Institute to evaluate the student experience. The Institute uses clear demonstrable mechanisms for gathering information from students. Opportunities for student feedback begin during admission and induction, and continue with regular formal feedback opportunities after each workshop and module. Feedback is also gathered formally from study day evaluation forms, student representatives, the Combined



Programme Committee and informally through tutorials, seminars and during module delivery and assessment. Programme leaders use student feedback to improve effectiveness. Progress reports are provided at workshops, and actions are fed into annual monitoring reviews.

2.12 Feedback is also gathered from a core study skills survey that resulted in provision of additional support. Detailed formal feedback is provided for assessments (written essays, case studies, theses, reports, placement reports, and presentations). Programme leaders analyse feedback and assessment results for patterns and consistency across modules. These provide a basis for improvement that is included in annual monitoring reviews.

### **How effectively does the Institute develop its staff in order to improve student learning opportunities?**

2.13 The part-time practitioners that constitute the Institute's staff team provide a continuous link to the psychotherapy profession and to students' future employers. Staff members' professional practice is monitored through professional body memberships and registration. Some staff members act as external examiners, and use these experiences to enhance their own teaching. All academic staff members are expected to take individual responsibility for their continuing professional development, which the Institute regards as integral to quality enhancement. Some staff members are updating their teaching and academic qualifications. A number of staff regularly attend conferences, make presentations, and write for publication. The Institute magazine *Contact* provides regular updates from both staff and students on continuing professional development, workshops, seminars and conferences. Staff members attend training events and workshops that support student needs and well-being - for example, dyslexia, first aid, and fire safety training.

2.14 New staff members are provided with a mentor during induction and in their initial stages of teaching. Academic teaching support mentors provide support to staff members who lack prior teaching experience. The Institute's physical resources and teaching methods ensure that staff members can sustain continuous close relationships with students and other teaching staff. Analysis of informal observations, peer observations and workshops enable staff to share and disseminate good practice on an informal basis.

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

2.15 The Institute is located in two buildings that provide multi-purpose rooms for counselling, teaching, workshops and consulting. The main administrative building includes a library and common room. A number of independent therapists occupy some rooms, although access to resources for students is available throughout the week, including weekends. The Institute acknowledges that being housed in two listed buildings presents some challenges for disabled access. Efforts have been made to ensure, wherever possible, that access to facilities and teaching accommodation is made accessible and reasonable adjustments are made to the timetable. Access to the basement library resources can be booked using the VLE.

2.16 The library has benefited from major investment that took significant account of staff and student feedback, as well as external consultation. The student resource room houses journals, collected articles, previous graduates' dissertations, computers, a database for searching the library resources, and access to photocopying. The University recently introduced lending rights for degree students. Overall, the Institute is situated in well appointed, pleasant and recently refurbished accommodation in working buildings for both

training and professional practice. Students noted improved access to resources that are generally seen as very good.

2.17 Some students travel considerable distances to attend the Institute. Graduate employability is very high, with students either working part-time in the profession while studying, or finding employment soon after graduation. A principal feature of all programmes is their delivery through three or four-day workshops at roughly six weekly intervals. This delivery pattern enhances critical reflection and the effectiveness of learning, and increases the programmes' accessibility to a wider range of students, including those who work or who have other life commitments. The part-time teaching pattern that links clinical placements to academic reflection is **good practice**.

2.18 The Institute tries to ensure that work-based placements are designated appropriately according to students' specialist areas. Early take-up of the Disclosure and Barring Service checks will help staff and students to access suitable placements. Students noted that the placement process was much improved, although delays in accessing placements still occur. The Institute consults placement supervisors by organising a placement provider day. Feedback has resulted in future planning of a longer placement day, including a placement fair for students, a placement information pack, and more opportunities to share good practice with other providers.

2.19 In summary, the team considers that the Institute effectively manages its responsibilities for the quality of learning opportunities. The Institute has good mechanisms for ensuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities that reflect its awarding body and professional body requirements. The part time teaching pattern and FAQ booklet are noted as good practice. Teaching and learning opportunities could be enhanced by more formalised teaching observation.

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

### 3 Information about learning opportunities

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

3.1 The process for application and selection provides clear, helpful entry criteria, assessment information and key programme content. The Institute uses a mixture of online and offline information and guidance for prospective students. Open days, induction and information events provide real value to students and applicants by raising awareness of the Institute's community and teaching environment. Evaluation forms for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes gather feedback, which is then set against competitor analysis to inform enhancements. The Institute is currently developing a system for statistical analysis of satisfaction with information about recruitment, retention and graduate employability data. It would be **desirable** for the Institute to continue to develop a process for statistical analysis of key data sets to improve information for prospective students.

3.2 The Institute provides detailed information about learning outcomes and entry requirements in regularly updated handbooks. The undergraduate and postgraduate information booklets set out clear expectations about study at the Institute, alongside important details about accessibility, employability, progression, learning methods and environment. Current students receive timely and accurate information on their programme

of study to help them achieve successful outcomes. Tutor and programme leader teams manage the consistency of course handbooks.

3.3 The quality of resources on the Institute's VLE is helpful to students, although broader engagement through forums or electronic submission would add value. Programme leaders monitor and maintain the VLE's quality and consistency. It would be **desirable** for the Institute to consider developing the virtual learning environment to create more interactive learning experiences.

3.4 The Institute uses various forms of social media, primarily to communicate static content. The Marketing and Recruitment Coordinator manages social media information to supplement information provided by the website and information days. The Institute's mission statement; strategic plan and learning, teaching and assessment strategy communicate its vision and mission to current and future students. However, these could be made more accessible.

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

3.5 The Director of Finance, Marketing and Recruitment has overall responsibility for updating both offline and online material, with sign-off by the University only for changes to marketing that involve their logo. Programme leaders develop content and the Directors approve the final copy. The Marketing and Recruitment Coordinator collates and distributes material across a range of online and offline media. The Institute's management of information policies ensures that all information is regulated, accurate, up to date, and published within accepted guidelines.

3.6 The Institute plans to produce marketing and promotional campaigns to extend its profile to a wider community through the Marketing and Recruitment Coordinator. Review and approval of publicity materials is part of the Institute's ongoing arrangement with its awarding body.

3.7 The Institute provides feedback to students on improvements to the quality of information made in response to their own recommendations, and this is disseminated through meeting minutes, the Institute's magazine and feedback sessions. Students are consulted on the quality of information provided in programme materials, the website and the VLE, but consultation is primarily reactive and sometimes informal, managing issues and concerns as they arise. It would be **desirable** for the Institute to develop more proactive opportunities for students to comment on the quality of information.

3.8 In summary, the Institute informs students about learning opportunities in a robust and reliable manner, through deliberate systems and processes, and across a broad range of materials. However, a more systematic approach to information, increased student input and a more interactive learning environment would strengthen this further.

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<sup>3</sup>

The Sherwood Psychotherapy Training Institute Ltd action plan relating to the Review of Specific Course Designation, May 2014						
Good practice	Intended outcomes	Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes	Target date(s)	Action by	Reported to	Evaluation (process or evidence)
The review team identified the following areas of <b>good practice</b> that are worthy of wider dissemination within the Institute:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the clear and succinct FAQ booklet 2014 that provides a single source for key information (paragraph 2.10)</li> </ul>	<p>To maintain the FAQ booklet as a single source of key information for prospective students</p> <p>Make this available online and hard copy</p>	Update this annually to reflect changes to programmes and fees	Before September each year	<p>Marketing and Recruitment Coordinator</p> <p>Senior management (programme leaders feed into this process)</p>	Director of Finance, Marketing and Recruitment	<p>Versions archive and audit trail of changes</p> <p>Minutes from senior management meetings</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the part-time teaching pattern that links clinical placements to academic reflection</li> </ul>	Maintain highly effective teaching pattern and continue to monitor the links to academic reflection via current systems	Continue this via review of module evaluations, academic assignments, external examiner reports and academic timetables	Ongoing throughout the year	Programme leaders with Director of Training	Company Directors	Module evaluations, academic assignments, external examiner reports, academic timetable

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

(paragraph 2.17)	Maintain current academic timetable with annual review of this	Ongoing review as part of programme leader meetings (monthly)  Annual review as part of annual quality monitoring process  Discussion at Strategic Director Meeting	Monthly  Annually  Termly	Programme leaders and Directors  Programme leaders and Directors  Company Directors	Company Directors  Company Directors  Company Directors	Minutes from programme leader meetings
<b>Advisable</b>	<b>Intended outcomes</b>	<b>Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes</b>	<b>Target date(s)</b>	<b>Action by</b>	<b>Reported to</b>	<b>Evaluation (process or evidence)</b>
The team considers that it is <b>advisable</b> for the Institute to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>enter into a new partnership agreement with an awarding body to ensure the continuity of its higher education programmes (paragraph 1.1)</li> </ul>	Secure new validation partnership with a new validating university that is committed to an ongoing partnership and has experience in the counselling and psychotherapy subject area	<p>Complete initial contact with prospective partners</p> <p>Complete initial applications to a number of universities in parallel and pursue discussions with same</p> <p>Confirmation from prospective partners (faculty and senate) that</p>	<p>August 2014</p> <p>September 2014</p> <p>September/October 2014</p>	<p>Director of Training and Director of Finance, Marketing and Recruitment with input from senior management (programme leaders)</p> <p>As above</p>	<p>Company Directors</p> <p>Programme leaders and Directors</p>	<p>Audit trail of correspondence with universities</p> <p>Minutes from Strategic Company Director, programme leader and staff meeting</p>

		they wish to pursue a partnership with the Institute			via programme leader monthly meetings	
		Compilation of detailed information for proposals	December 2014	As above	Company Directors	Documentation submitted to partner for validation approval
		Submit detailed proposals	May 2015 (at latest)		Company Directors	
		Detail scrutiny				
		Approval panel				
		Proceed to validation event	June 2015 (at latest)	As above	Company Directors	New validation agreement
		Written agreement with new partner	July 2015	As above	Company Directors	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>map its policies and procedures to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education's expectations and indicators (paragraph 1.7)</li> </ul>	Ensure policies are fit for purpose and relate to the Quality Code	Briefing of senior management on mapping of policies to Quality Code	September 2014	Director of Training	Company Directors	Minutes from Strategic Company Director, senior management and staff meetings
		Identify key policies/ procedures and responsibilities for updates	September 2014	Director of Training with support from Directors' Personal Assistant	Company Directors	Audit trail of versions and mapping
		Allocation of mapping to key individuals				

		Review and update all policies (within 2014-15 academic year) in relation to the Quality Code	Between September and December 2014	Key individuals/ Personal Assistant	Director of Training	Planning and minutes from training session and correspondence with tutors
		Internal training for all key staff	As above	Director of Training with programme leaders	Company Directors	
		Dissemination of updated policies and procedures to all tutors and key staff	By January 2015	Director of Training with programme leaders	Company Directors	
<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Intended outcomes</b>	<b>Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes</b>	<b>Target date/s</b>	<b>Action by</b>	<b>Reported to</b>	<b>Evaluation (process or evidence)</b>
The team considers that it would be <b>desirable</b> for the Institute to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>collate all its policies into one central quality assurance manual (paragraph 1.4)</li> </ul>	Produce unified quality assurance manual and a tutor handbook which incorporates this	Identify key policies for inclusion	December 2014	Project Manager (Directors' Personal Assistant)	Director of Training	Versions archive and audit trail of changes to policies
		Collate and reorganise all policies storing in one place on computer systems	December 2014	Project Manager (Directors' Personal Assistant)/IT Consultant	Director of Training	

		Remove or archive all duplicate or previous versions of policies	December 2014	Project Manager (Directors' Personal Assistant)/IT Consultant	Director of Training	
		Create both electronic and hard copy quality assurance manual	January 2015	Project Manager (Directors' Personal Assistant)/IT Consultant	Director of Training	Quality assurance manual/tutor handbook containing all key policies
		Ensure all relevant policy documents are included in updated tutor handbook	January 2015	Project Manager (Personal Assistant)	Director of Training	
		Once completed seek feedback from all tutors regarding format, accessibility and range of information included	June/July 2015	Project Manager (Personal Assistant)/ Director of Training	Director of Training	Correspondence with tutors/feedback comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>monitor the shortfall in clinical placement hours and strengthen its resources for finding placements</li> </ul>	Monitor student progress in relation to clinical hours	Collate and review statistics following Exam Board	Annually in October	Director of Training/ Academic Administrators Project Manager (Personal Assistant)	Director of Training	Statistics created post Exam Board to show shortfall across and within programmes



(paragraph 1.9)	Continue to develop directory of placements and build relationships with placement providers	Update placement provider database	Monthly with six month review	Directors	Directors	Updated Directory of placements/ database
	Appoint Placement Officer to strengthen links with placements and support students	Appoint Placement Officer initially as a 12 month project	October 2014	Placement Officer	Directors	Notes from meeting with Placement Officer
		Develop new links with placement providers and feedback for update of database	Ongoing from October 2014	Placement Officer with Director of Training	Director of Training	
		Review progress of Placement Officer project	Monthly	Project Manager (Personal Assistant)/ Placement Officer	Director of Training	
		Continue annual placement provider day and placement fair	Annually in March	Director of Training/ Project Manager (Personal Assistant)	Company Directors	Notes and actions from placement provider day/fair
		Review and extend planning and preparation for placement workshop (as part of placement provider day initially)	Before March 2015	Placement Officer	Director of Training	Feedback forms from workshop/training event

		<p>Placement Officer to review the process for feedback from students relating to placements in order to improve placements information</p> <p>Via student survey review student feedback on placement finding, support offered and placement information and availability</p> <p>Review statistics relating to clinical hours and student survey in relation to success of these initiatives</p>	<p>Ongoing from October 2014</p> <p>October 2015</p> <p>October 2015</p>	<p>Project Manager (Personal Assistant)/ Placement Officer</p> <p>Director of Training/ Academic Administrators</p>	<p>Company Directors</p> <p>Programme leaders and Directors</p> <p>Director of Training</p> <p>Company Directors and programme leaders</p>	<p>Minutes from programme leader meetings</p> <p>Survey data</p> <p>Statistics and action plan based upon them from both programme leader and Strategic Director meetings</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>further develop formalised teaching observations of all teaching staff to support dissemination and sharing of good practice (paragraph 2.7)</li> </ul>	<p>Develop programme of peer observation within and across tutor teams</p>	<p>Discuss recommendation at programme leader and whole tutor meetings</p> <p>Timetable plan for co-tutoring and teaching observation</p>	<p>On agenda for September 2014 whole tutor team meeting and individual termly team meetings</p> <p>By December 2014</p>	<p>Director of Training/ Directors' Personal Assistant to add to agenda</p> <p>Programme leaders and Company Directors</p>	<p>Director of Training</p> <p>Director of Training</p>	<p>Minutes from programme team meetings</p> <p>Observation logs/timetable</p>

		Feedback process/log to be agreed	From January 2015	Programme leaders	Director of Training	Audit trail of minutes from individual and team discussions
		Implement planned observations	From January 2015	Programme leaders	Director of Training and Company Directors	
		Feedback to/from individual tutors	From January 2015	Programme leaders	As above	Staff feedback
		Feedback to programme leaders and Company Directors for strategic planning purposes	From January 2015	Programme leaders and Company Directors	Company Directors	
		Review of staff training needs based on this feedback. Incorporated into individual and team staff development plan	July 2015	Programme leaders and Company Directors		Individual and team development plans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>continue to develop a process for statistical analysis of key data sets to improve information for students (paragraph 3.1)</li> </ul>	Further develop the database to collect statistics and enable more detailed reporting	Identify key statistical data to be collected	November 2014	Director of Finance, Marketing and Recruitment, Marketing and Recruitment Coordinator	Director of Finance, Marketing and Recruitment	New statistical data produced for FAQ
		Development of database	By January 2015	IT Consultant with Marketing and	Director of Finance, Marketing	

		<p>Creation of annual marketing report (for internal staff)</p> <p>Publish statistical data to the public as marketing materials (incorporate into the annual FAQ document)</p> <p>More detailed statistics data to be included in annual quality monitoring process</p>	<p>February 2015 and then each October</p> <p>July 2015</p> <p>Annually</p>	<p>Recruitment Coordinator</p> <p>Marketing and Recruitment Coordinator</p> <p>IT Consultant with Marketing and Recruitment Coordinator</p> <p>Director of Finance, Marketing and Recruitment</p>	<p>and Recruitment</p> <p>Director of Finance, Marketing and Recruitment</p> <p>Director of Finance, Marketing and Recruitment</p> <p>Company Directors</p>	<p>Annual monitoring report</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>consider developing the virtual learning environment to create more interactive learning experiences (paragraph 3.3)</li> </ul>	<p>Develop potential of the virtual learning environment</p>	<p>Invite IT consultant to all tutors meeting in September to explore potential developments</p> <p>Seek feedback and suggestions from students (via QAA focus group, Combined Programmes Committee meeting and/or survey)</p>	<p>September 2014</p> <p>September 2014</p>	<p>Director of Training/ Directors' Personal Assistant</p> <p>Programme leaders</p>	<p>Director of Training</p> <p>Director of Training</p>	<p>Minutes and Actions from all tutor meeting</p> <p>Minutes and actions from Combined Programmes Committee and focus group meetings and/or outcome from survey</p>

		Discuss implications at Programme leader meeting	October/ November 2014	Programme leader and Company Directors	Director of Training	Minutes from programme leader meetings/team meetings
		Take specific suggestions to programme team meetings for further discussion	January 2015	Programme leaders and teams	Director of Training	
		Agree improvements and changes to be made	March 2015	Director of Training	Director of Training	Agreed list of actions/development to virtual learning environment
		Implement developments to the virtual learning environment	April/May 2015	IT Consultant/ administration team/ programme leaders	Director of Training	Improved virtual learning environment with increased interactivity
		Review with students via survey/Combined Programmes Committee process	September 2015	Project Manager (Personal Assistant)/IT Consultant	Director of Training	Minutes from Combined Programmes Committee meeting/survey results
		Review of the developments and gathering of suggestions for further development with staff (including survey of all tutors)	September 2015	Director of training with IT Consultant	Company Directors and programme leaders	Feedback from staff both from staff and team meeting and survey results

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop more proactive opportunities for students to comment on the quality of information (paragraph 3.7)</li> </ul>	Build on the goodwill and enthusiasm generated by student involvement in QAA process	Invite students who participated in QAA review to the all-tutor meeting to present ideas generated	September 2014	Directors and Personal Assistant	Company Directors	Audit trail of minutes from meetings and agreed actions
	Review of Combined Programmes Committee process and its effectiveness to facilitate greater opportunities for students to comment on the quality of information	Discussion with representatives within Combined Programmes Committee process	November 2014	Company Directors	Company Directors	
		Discussion within Senior Management Team to agree plan for increased student input into information	December 2014	Programme leaders and Company Directors	Company Directors	
	Agree an annual forum for students to give and receive feedback on updates to information	Create student-staff working group (comprising student volunteers/ reps and staff) to take agreed suggestions forward [NB: The aim is for this group to be balanced across programmes but until initial discussions take place its shape is difficult to determine]	March 2015	Programme leaders with support from Directors' Personal Assistant	Company Directors	Terms of reference for student forum and minutes from first meeting/ discussion
	Continue annual student survey	Survey questions to be agreed with student-staff working group	May 2015	Programme leaders with support from Directors'	Company Directors	Survey data from current students

		<p>Survey sent to all current students at end of year</p> <p>Survey data to be analysed, fed back to working group and actions established</p>	<p>Annual commencing July 2015</p> <p>Before November 2015 Combined Programmes Committee meeting</p>	<p>Personal Assistant</p> <p>Directors' Personal Assistant</p> <p>Directors Personal Assistant</p>	<p>Company Directors</p> <p>Company Directors, programme leaders and student-staff working group</p>	<p>Action plan from analysed survey data</p> <p>Survey results feedback to students</p>
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## About QAA

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

QAA's aims are to:

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

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

More information about the work of QAA is available at: [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk).

More detail about Review for Specific Course Designation can be found at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/RSCD.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/RSCD.aspx).



## Glossary

This glossary explains terms used in this report. You can find a fuller glossary at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/glossary](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/glossary). Formal definitions of key terms can be found in the [Review for Educational Oversight \(and for specific course designation\): Handbook, April 2013](#).<sup>4</sup>

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

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

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

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

**differentiated judgements** In a Review for Specific Course Designation, separate judgements respectively for the provision validated by separate awarding bodies.

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

**external examiner** An independent expert appointed by an institution to comment on student achievement in relation to established academic standards and to look at approaches to assessment.

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

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

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

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

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<sup>4</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2707](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2707)

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

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

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

**provider(s) (of higher education)** Organisations that deliver higher education. In the UK they may be a degree-awarding body or another organisation that offers programmes of higher education on behalf of degree-awarding bodies or awarding organisations. In the context of Review for Specific Course Designation the term means an independent college.

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

**quality** See **academic quality**.

**Quality Code** Short term for the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which is the UK-wide set of reference points for higher education providers (agreed through consultation with the higher education community, and published by QAA), which states the Expectations that all providers are required to meet.

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

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

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

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

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