Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) of St Patrick's International College Ltd

Partial Re-review

September 2016

Contents

About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education (Alternative Providers) partial re-review conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at St Patrick's International College Ltd. The review took place from 6 to 7 September 2016 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Miss Sarah Bennett (student reviewer)
- Ms Brenda Eade
- Mr Clive Turner.

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

This was a partial re-review following an original review undertaken in November 2015 which resulted in the following published report. The QAA review team made judgements on the two areas requiring improvement – the quality of student learning opportunities and the enhancement of student learning opportunities.

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

The QAA website gives more information about QAA and its mission.[2] A dedicated section explains the method for Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers).[3] For an explanation of terms see the glossary at the end of this report.

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[1] The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at: www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code
[2] QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us.
[3] Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers):
www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/Educational-Oversight-.aspx

Key findings

QAA's judgements about St Patrick's International College Ltd

The QAA review team formed the following judgements resulting from the re-review about the higher education provision at St Patrick's International College Ltd.

- The quality of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The enhancement of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following features of **good practice** at St Patrick's International College Ltd.

- The individualised support for students provided by academic and support staff (Expectations B3, B4 and B6).
- The extensive opportunities to engage students as partners in the assurance of their educational experience, including the Student Council (Expectation B5).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations** to St Patrick's International College Ltd.

- Strengthen the link between the College's strategy for developing and approving new programmes and the information provided for prospective students on its website about those programmes (Expectation B1).
- Improve the clarity and accuracy of the information on the College's website, and within linked documentation, which sets out the grounds upon which prospective students may lodge an appeal against an admissions decision (Expectation B2).
- Develop the approach to the analysis of progression, retention and achievement data at a cross-College level to strengthen strategic oversight of the College's academic provision (Expectation B3).
- Put in place a coordinated approach to providing timely guidance for students about their opportunities for continuing their higher education studies beyond HND level (Expectation B4).
- Implement strategic College-wide monitoring and evaluation of Heads of Schools' academic appeals decisions (Expectation B9).

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

About St Patrick's International College Ltd

Originally founded in 1803 and funded by the Catholic Church, St Patrick's International College Ltd is now a private for-profit company. It began delivering higher education provision in 1998 with a 'progressive stance in respect of curriculum development and growth'. It is now part of the Global University Systems Group.

At the time of the original review in November 2015, the College was based at Duncan House in Stratford, East London. Two weeks prior to the re-review it relocated to Sceptre Court, Tower Hill, premises owned by its holding company. At the same time it closed the

Duncan House site and also closed a second temporary campus at 30 Holborn which had been in use since January 2016.

Currently Pearson is the College's only awarding partner, enabling the delivery of Higher National (HN) diplomas in a number of subject areas:

HND Business Management
HND Hospitality Management
HND Health and Social Care Management
HND Information Systems Engineering (ISE)
HND Network Engineering and Telecommunications (NETS)
HND Fashion and Textiles.

An HND in Law is currently being completed with no further recruitment taking place.

The College has ceased to offer programmes above level 5 (such as Advanced Diplomas and Postgraduate Diplomas) to enable it to focus on HNCs and HNDs. It is also introducing a number of level 3 qualifications designed to better prepare students for entry to its HNCs. These qualifications will be with three different awarding organisations: OCN, NCON and ATHE.

Provision is based within seven schools: Technology; Business and Management; Health and Social Care; Tourism and Hospitality Management; Law; Art and Design (currently providing only programmes in Fashion); and Post Graduate and Professional Studies (which becomes fully operational in 2017).

At July 2016 the College had 1,778 students, all studying full-time, mostly comprising UK students, and approximately five per cent from other EU countries. The majority of students were studying for the HND Health and Social Care and the HND Business Management. A number of programmes are designated for student loans. June 2015 saw the first new intake of students since a moratorium on the recruitment of new HN students was introduced in November 2013. Further intakes took place in October 2015, January and May 2016. At the time of the re-review visit, the College had 85 full-time equivalent academic staff.

Shortly before the re-review visit took place the College Principal had been replaced by an Interim Principal. A Dean for Academic Standards had also been appointed, joining the Senior Management Team (SMT) in January 2016.

Following the original review the College finalised a new Strategic Plan 2016-20, coupled with a new Enhancement Strategy and supported by five major strategies: Learning and Teaching; Portfolio Development; Staff Development; Widening Participation; and Assessment. The Strategic Plan sets out the following vision for the College: 'Our vision is to continue widening access to education, helping students to improve their employability and encouraging inclusivity across the sector. We assembled an excellent academic team and student services, ensuring the delivery of high quality education. We aim to be recognised as a provider of outstanding vocational education, helping students to achieve their ambitions.'

The review team was provided with a student submission, based on a survey led by the Lead Student Representative, and met a large group of students, which included the Lead Student Representative (who is also the Student Council President) and other members of the Student Council. The review team also met the Chair of the Governing Body and the recently appointed Interim Principal.

Explanation of the findings about St Patrick's International College Ltd

This section explains the review findings in more detail.

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

Explanation of the findings about St Patrick's International College Ltd

1 Judgement: The quality of student learning opportunities

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

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

Findings

1.1   Since the Higher Education Review in November 2015 the College has developed a Portfolio Development Strategy to identify new areas of development which are aligned to the College's Mission and Vision. It has established a two-stage process for programme development, and constituted the Programme Development and Enhancement Committee (PDEC) to consider new programme proposals, withdrawal of current programmes and major changes to existing programmes. Terms of Reference for PDEC are included in the Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) Handbook. The awarding organisation, Pearson, maintains strategic oversight of the approval processes for the qualifications which the College delivers on its behalf.

1.2   The recently developed Portfolio Development Strategy, the two-stage process for programme design and development and the recently constituted PDEC provide effective processes for the design, development and approval of programmes and enable the Expectation to be met in principle.

1.3   The review team tested the Expectation by examining the Terms of Reference and minutes of the PDEC, SMT and Academic Board and reviewed documentation relating to new programme proposals, including the programme planning templates and the first-stage proposals for three Level 3 programmes. The team met the Chair of the Board of Governors and the recently appointed Interim Principal, members of the SMT, teaching staff and students. In these meetings the review team discussed the Terms of Reference and operation of PDEC and explored to what extent proposals for new programmes align with the College's mission and its Portfolio Development Strategy. The review team also checked the programmes currently listed on the College's website.

1.4   The College has relied on the well-established processes and procedures of its awarding organisation (Pearson) for programme design and approval. However, as it intends to offer programmes with other awarding organisations it has developed its own internal processes and procedures for programme development.

1.5   The Portfolio Development Strategy, which sets out the direction of the College's plans for new programmes during 2016-20, is one of the five pillars of the recently established Master Strategic Plan. The PDEC provides a forum for the discussion and consideration of new programme proposals. The terms of reference of the newly established committee include the development of new programmes, significant changes to existing programmes, the withdrawal of programmes and programme monitoring and review. Membership of the committee includes representatives from all schools and from students. The committee is chaired by the Dean of Quality, Policy and Research who reports to SMT on the deliberations of the committee. The final decision regarding programme design and approval rests with SMT. Student representation on the committee enables them to have an input into programme design and to comment on any changes proposed to existing programmes. The College has canvassed their views on the introduction of Level 3 courses

to provide access to the HND programmes it currently delivers. The QAA Subject Benchmark Statements and the expertise of representatives from Pearson have been used as external reference points for the development of two customised IT programmes.

1.6   Several members of staff have experience of developing new programmes and have acted as panel members for other providers. Staff development has included training sessions by two of the awarding organisations who are new to the College - OCN and NOCN. These sessions introduced College staff to the procedures and processes associated with these awards.

1.7   Through the newly established process for programme development, proposals for new programmes can be initiated by any member of staff but must then be sanctioned by the Head of School before going forward for discussion by PDEC. A programme planning template has been created for each stage of the process. Stage two of the programme design and development process requires submission of a three to five year business plan, full details of the curriculum content and the strategy for delivery and assessment of the programme. A lifecycle for programme development has not yet been established, but meetings with senior staff confirmed that they recognised the need to fully cost and plan the introduction of new programmes.

1.8   The PDEC had its inaugural meeting in February 2016 and has subsequently met on three occasions. Minutes of the meetings include discussions relating to proposals for Access to higher education programmes. The committee received a report on the introduction of ATHE programmes at Level 3 and on the College becoming a registered centre for OCN and NOCN. Discussions took place regarding the implications of the proposed start dates and resourcing for these new programmes. The committee also discussed the withdrawal of the HN Law programme, following a Concerns letter from QAA, and minutes of the meeting confirm that this programme is no longer offered by the College. QAA has confirmed that the issues raised in the Concerns Investigation have been fully addressed.

1.9   The Portfolio Development Strategy states that the focus of programme development for 2016-17 will be on level 3 programmes. This was confirmed by the meeting with the Chair of the Board of Governors and the Interim Principal. However, the minutes of the meeting of PDEC held in February 2016 refer to the development of two master's programmes – an MSc International Health Care Policy and Management and an MA EU Law and Policies. The review team found that these programmes and two advanced diplomas were listed on the College website. The SMT confirmed that the programmes are no longer part of the portfolio development strategy, and the future direction of programme development for 2016-17 is focused on level 3. Details of the master's and advanced diploma programmes have since been removed from the website. However, in view of the previous lack of clarity about the direction of programme development identified in the original QAA review and the misleading information available to students on the website at the time of the review visit, the review team **recommends** that the College strengthens the link between its strategy for developing and approving new programmes and the information provided for prospective students on its website about those programmes.

1.10   At the time of the review visit, no programmes had gone forward to stage two of the development process, so the effectiveness of the procedures has not been fully tested, but the College plans to undertake a comprehensive review of the new committee and the effectiveness of the programme development and approval process in January 2017.

1.11   The College has addressed the recommendations of the November 2015 report which required it to effect strategic oversight of programme development and develop formal procedures for programme design and approval. It now has a clear strategy for future

programme development which is aligned to the College's mission of widening participation and providing educational opportunities for the local population. Formal procedures for programme design and approval have been introduced that take account of potential markets and the physical and human resources required for the delivery of new programmes. The recently constituted PDEC has oversight of the development process.

1.12   The review team concludes that the well-established processes and procedures of the current awarding organisation, Pearson, and the College's two-stage process for programme development through the newly constituted PDEC strengthen the College's internal procedures for programme development and allow the Expectation to be met. Although the team found some incorrect information on the website about the availability of master's programmes, the College is well placed to address the recommendation to strengthen the link between its planned portfolio and the information it provides to prospective students. Furthermore, Pearson maintains oversight of the development of the awards offered by the College on its behalf, and the College's internal processes for programme development and approval are robust. The review team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education*

Findings

1.13   Admissions requirements for prospective students are outlined in the College QAE Handbook. The system aims to be fair, transparent and operated on an equal opportunities basis. Recruitment, selection and admissions policies are also informed by the College's Widening Participation Strategy, which sets out the College's commitment to recruiting students from diverse backgrounds. The Pearson annual Academic Management Review Report 2015-16 stated that the College recruitment, registration and certification procedures enabled students to make an informed choice, and described the checking of certification claims as 'robust'. These policies and procedures allow the Expectation to be met in principle.

1.14   The review team examined the effectiveness of recruitment, selection and admission by analysing documentation and website content relating to the procedures employed by the College. The team also met staff and students to discuss recruitment and admission policies and procedures.

1.15   The majority of students initially hear about St Patrick's through word-of-mouth recommendations. Prospective students can complete an information request on the College website, which is sent to the Admissions Team by email. Information regarding potential courses is available on the College website, which lists the courses available with each of the five schools.

1.16   The College has specified a policy and delivered refresher training for recruitment agents, which outlines the standards required of agents operating on behalf of the College.

1.17   In an effort to ensure that all students have the required capability, skills and motivation to complete their chosen programme of study, applicants to the College must pass a series of selection procedures including English and Mathematics tests. Entry requirements are clear and students confirmed that any additional learning requirements are accommodated. Both tests must be passed (a score of 40 per cent) to gain admission. After testing, prospective students are invited to a face-to-face personal interview, where staff from the relevant School judge each candidate's motivation and suitability for the programme. The revised and updated College Interview Form defines a structured interview procedure, with prompts covering the practical demands of the programme, motivation to study at higher education level, suitability for the subject and communication skills. Induction sessions are also compulsory; any student failing to attend will be withdrawn from the College register.

1.18   The November 2015 QAA review recommended that the College 'monitor, review and evaluate the effectiveness of the revised admissions process, drawing on feedback from successful and unsuccessful applicants'. The College has taken progressive steps towards this conducting an Admissions Survey with their January 2016 cohort to gather students' views of the recruitment and admissions process. This assessed applicants' initial contact with the College, including the type of information received, satisfaction with the information provided, whether applicants were able to make an informed decision and their overall

satisfaction with the recruitment process. The majority of successful and unsuccessful applicants were very satisfied with the recruitment process, the information given and staff responses. However, a significant number of written responses from applicants indicated a lack of professionalism and coordination from recruitment staff, and poor communication from admissions staff. Candidates were only told about compulsory induction sessions at the last minute, or in some cases not at all. These outcomes were fed back by Admissions staff to the SMT, who identified key areas for improvement including clearer recruitment timelines and improved communication between Student Support and the Admissions Team.
On meeting with staff, the review team heard the College's plans to continually monitor and review the admissions process, giving examples of revised interview documentation and staff training; improvements that had been made in response to student feedback.

1.19   A second recommendation of the November 2015 review was for the College to 'implement effective arrangements for applicants to appeal and/or complain about the recruitment, selection and admission process'. In relation to complaints, the College has taken steps to emphasise the availability of complaints procedures regarding recruitment, selection and admission processes to prospective students. Information regarding the complaints timeline and the grounds on which prospective students may lodge a formal or informal complaint regarding their application to the College is clearly available on the College website.

1.20   However, there remains some confusion regarding prospective students' rights to appeal against an admissions decision. Although the document on the College website relating to admissions appeals mentioned appeals in the title, there is no further guidance for prospective students. Professional Services staff believed that students had the right to appeal the College's admissions decisions, with the final decision made by the respective Head of School. Conversely, the College website at the time of the review stated that students have 'no right to appeal' during the application process. The current system lacks transparency for prospective students. Staff who met the review team acknowledged that guidance to prospective students regarding admissions appeals needed to be further considered. The review team therefore **recommends** that the College improves the clarity and accuracy of the information on the College's website, and within linked documentation, which sets out the grounds upon which prospective students may lodge an appeal against an admissions decision.

1.21   The College has implemented effective procedures to monitor, review and evaluate the recruitment, selection and admission process and procedures, in order to enhance them and ensure the continued support of their mission and objectives. Appropriate and effective procedures and policies are in place. Therefore, the review team concludes that Expectation B2 is met and the level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching*

Findings

1.22   The College has an updated Teaching and Learning Strategy illustrated in the LTLA (Little's Law of Teaching, Learning and Assessment) model and made operational within the Term Management Process Model and the Course Management Quality Process Lifecycle all of which are designed to ensure that teaching and learning is effective and up to standard.

1.23   The Department of Academic Learning and Enhancement (DALE) is designed to support students in all aspects of their academic work and particularly in the development of their digital literacy. Heads of School are charged with ensuring adequacy and competence of staff. The College has revised its Progression Policy and produced both an Action Plan and documented guidance on improving teaching and learning. The QAE handbook has been revised and is the principal point of reference for programme review and evaluation procedures.

1.24   The revised systems which are built upon the existing arrangements allow the Expectation to be met in principle.

1.25   The review team held meetings with the Chair of the Board of Governors and the Interim Principal, senior staff, academic staff, professional services staff and students. The team considered a range of documents submitted by the College including the revised College Overarching Strategy, the revised Teaching and Learning Strategy, the LTLA diagram, the revised QAE Handbook. Also included were the minutes of a range of meetings - PDEC, Academic Board, SMT, the Student Experience and Learning and Teaching Committee (SELT) (including the Terms of Reference and structure diagram), Pre Term Boards, Mid Term Boards, Unit Assessment Boards, Boards of Examiners, Standards Verifier Reports, Student Council minutes, the Pearson Academic Management Review Report 2015-16, the Action Plan for Improving Teaching and Learning, the Dean of Academic Standards' report on OTL and the Dissemination of Good Practice, the Quality Assurance Report (January 2016), the Progression Policy and Associated procedures, the Revised Staff Development Strategy and Interim Report, and the Term Management Process Model (TMPM) files.

1.26   Since the November 2015 review, the College has published a significantly revised and updated Staff Development Strategy and has committed to the use of external, online staff development software. The link between these approaches and the College's enhancement approach is illustrated diagrammatically.

1.27   The College has now committed to supporting staff to achieve HEA Fellowship and the new arrangements for staff development via the now fully available software provides for both direction by College managers as well individual determination by academic staff. Managers and staff confirmed that the system was working effectively and enabling academic staff to improve their professional practice as teachers. Additionally, there is evidence that dialogue about pedagogy and the effectiveness of different forms of

assessment is taking place within and across schools, including at the now annual staff conference.

1.28   The review team considered that the evidence from the meetings with staff and students and the documentary evidence support the view that the good practice identified in the previous review visit is still the case, and may actually have been enhanced further, especially through the system of frequent progress monitoring of students. The minutes of the Mid Term Boards, the Unit Assessment Boards and the TMPM files demonstrate clearly that student progression and achievement data are now being prepared and used effectively to monitor individual student progress and to make recommendations for individualised, tailored support by academic tutors and DALE as necessary. The effectiveness of this development was confirmed by academic staff and students. The support for students that is now provided by the College both improves their learning and achievement and facilitates their personal development (see Expectation B4). The individualised support for students provided by academic and support staff is a feature of **good practice**.

1.29   While the use of data is effective in enabling the provision of support for individual students, the College has yet to demonstrate that cross-College data about student progression, retention and achievement are being systematically considered, for example comparing different cohorts and different years across all Schools, to monitor the College's progress and to inform strategic decision making including in relation to the continued enhancement of learning and teaching. Discussion with the SMT demonstrated that the College has begun to recognise the potential of such data, and the review team is persuaded that the College is collecting the data in a reliable way which will enable it to be used effectively. The review team therefore **recommends** that the College develops its approach to the analysis of progression, retention and achievement data at a cross-College level to strengthen strategic oversight of the College's academic provision.

1.30   In the well-attended meeting with students, it became clear that although the student submission suggests few students seem to be aware or make use of DALE, students actually recognise the service as the provision of 'essential skills' and that they are very positive about the support services available to them. Students are also unanimously positive about the move to Sceptre House and are pleased that all College students and support services will now be provided on one site. They confirm that the new building is more easily accessible and that the infrastructure is of a much higher standard than before. They also commented positively about the job fairs and aspirational visits and workshops put on by the College. Students saw these developments as a major improvement in their learning environment and the support they receive. (This is considered further under the judgement on Enhancement.)

1.31   The review team scrutinised evidence of complaints by students submitted since the previous QAA review visit. This suggested that the issue of classroom management was again becoming a problem. In meetings with academic and senior staff the review team received assurances that this was not the case and that all the complaints listed had received careful investigation and appropriate intervention from the designated member of the SMT and that all complaints had been satisfactorily dealt with. The review team considers that the College needs to maintain this level of vigilance and to provide ongoing support for staff at all levels. Given the current level of monitoring and effective management the team does not consider that a recommendation is warranted.

1.32   The College has addressed the key issues identified in the original report regarding the oversight, direction and monitoring of its staff development strategy, the quality and use of data in the monitoring and support of students and in providing an environment and infrastructure that is conducive to effective teaching, learning and student achievement. Although the College has yet to fully develop its use of data about student retention,

progression and achievement to facilitate analysis and understanding at a cross-College level, the review team considers that the College has taken significant steps to assure the quality of learning opportunities and teaching practices and that therefore the Expectation is met and the risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.33   The College's strategic and operational approaches are set out in the Strategic Plan, the Teaching and Learning Strategy, the revised QAE Handbook and the Staff Teaching and Management Procedures Handbook. These continue to be supported by a committee and organisational structure, and by the DALE and the Student Experience Department. Since the original review, the College has also implemented the Student Experience and Learning and Teaching Committee (SELT).

1.34   The design of systems and the provision of the learning environment continues to allow the Expectation to be met in principle.

1.35   The review team tested the Expectation by reading a range of documents including the revised Higher Education Strategy, Teaching and Learning Strategy, revised organisational structure and noted the move to the new premises. Meetings took place between the review team and members of College staff and with students. The review team, being based in the new accommodation, was able to see examples of teaching and learning spaces and some office accommodation.

1.36   The meeting with students confirmed that the move to the new premises and the ease of access to College services facilitated by that move will assist students in their personal and academic development and improve their learning opportunities (as mentioned in Expectation B3). This deliberate step by College management also contributes to the review team's judgement on Enhancement.

1.37   The meeting with students revealed that they felt that the guidance provided by the College on what progression opportunities there might be to other higher education providers offering top-up degrees was inadequate for their needs. There appeared to be a lack of clarity as to who was responsible for providing the guidance or ensuring that those giving guidance had up-to-date knowledge about further study opportunities. Given that the revised HE Strategy plans for provision up to, but not beyond, Level 5 for the College this is clearly an issue of increasing importance for students. The review team **recommends** therefore that the College puts in place a coordinated approach to providing timely guidance for students about their opportunities for continuing their higher education studies beyond HND level.

1.38   As mentioned under Expectation B3, the meeting with students confirmed a high level of awareness and very positive support for the services provided by that part of the College they recognise as 'essential skills'. The College refers to this as DALE. The College may wish to consider this issue in promoting the work and function of this valued service in the future.

1.39   The good practice and strategic commitment to ensuring that students are provided with an environment that supports and encourages their personal development was noted in the original review. The move to new premises is a significant improvement to the learning environment for all staff and students and is also reflected in the findings for both Expectations B3 and Enhancement. For these reasons the Expectation is met and the risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B5: Student Engagement*

Findings

1.40   The College takes considered steps to involve all students as partners in quality assurance and the learning process. The College's Strategic Plan and Quality Assurance Handbook set out a range of opportunities for students to be involved and engaged in College decision-making processes, and the key performance indicators used to review and evaluate progress. Details of student engagement opportunities are provided in the student handbook, which explains the role of student representatives, the Student Council, Student Officers and the opportunities for students to be involved in providing feedback. Students are encouraged to talk with the Student Officers about any issue they would not feel comfortable discussing directly with lecturers or support staff. These arrangements allow the Expectation to be met in principle.

1.41   In testing the Expectation, the review team considered the student submission, the student handbook minutes and documentation from meetings where students had been invited to participate and The Vibe student magazine.

1.42   To ensure representation of students at all levels, Student Council Officers recruit representatives from each programme and at every stage. Although voluntary, this is seen by the College as a valuable way of ensuring that student attitudes are regularly conveyed to College management. The Student Experience Team provides training for Student Officers and Representatives and students receive certificates in recognition of their achievements.

1.43   Students are encouraged to engage and provide feedback as members of the new Programme Development Committee (PDEC), Mid Term Board meetings, and Student Council meetings. They are invited to comment on programme development and academic provision and to discuss any academic or non-academic issues with staff. The extensive opportunities to engage students as partners in the assurance of their educational experience, including the Student Council, is a feature of **good practice**.

1.44   The Student Experience Department and Student Services Team work alongside the Student Council to provide a variety of opportunities for students to enhance their academic and social experience. Activities include various sports, talks from visiting experts and industry representatives, a debating society and Careers Fair, and The Vibe student magazine. A variety of training and workshops are also offered, including public speaking, confidence building, time management and IT skills, with opportunities available for students to give feedback.

1.45   Students who met the review team spoke positively of their experiences as student representatives, highlighting the steps they had taken to raise awareness of their role among the student body. Students also gave examples of their views and feedback being taken into account during the recent relocation of the College. The effectiveness of student engagement is monitored through the use of the College's own student survey. Staff described how data from their own student survey are benchmarked against results from the National Student Survey (NSS), and explained the plans to take part in the NSS from 2017.

1.46   Overall, the College has effective measures to engage with students at different levels and a variety of opportunities are available to enhance the student experience.

Therefore the review team concludes that Expectation B5 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.47   Since the QAA review in November 2015, the College has strengthened its assessment processes through the development of an Assessment Strategy, which forms one of the five pillars of its Master Strategic Plan. This strategy provides a framework for ensuring that assessment processes are equitable, valid and reliable across the College. It sets out procedures for the standardisation of assignment briefs, internal verification of assessed work, assessment boards and includes regulations relating to the submission of assignments, academic malpractice, extenuating circumstances and reasonable adjustments.

1.48   The awarding organisation, Pearson, continues to monitor the achievement of learning outcomes through the standards verification process which includes examining samples of assessed work and meetings with assessors and students.

1.49   The combination of the strategic oversight of the assessment process by Pearson and the College's recently implemented assessment strategy enable the Expectation to be met in principle.

1.50   The review team met the Dean of Academic Standards, members of SMT, teaching staff and students. It scrutinised documentation relating to the assessment process including the Assessment Strategy, Standards Verifier Reports, and minutes of Pre Term Boards (PTBs), Mid Term Boards (MTBs), Unit Assessment Boards (UABs), and Boards of Examiners (BoE). The review team also reviewed the Term Management Process Model files for all six schools for 2015-16, which were made available in hard copy at the time of their visit to the College.

1.51   The College has a clear set of Assessment Regulations which are articulated in the student handbook. These include academic malpractice, extenuating circumstances and submission regulations. Students are introduced to the regulations during induction. The students who met the review team confirmed that they were familiar with the Assessment Regulations and that these contained clear guidance on all matters relating to assessment including, submission and resubmission of assessments, grading, extenuating circumstances and academic misconduct.

1.52   The review team found that the College has responded to the recommendations made in the review in November 2015 'to develop strategic oversight of assessment to monitor the consistency of processes across schools and to enable the sharing of good practice'. The appointment of a Dean of Academic Standards represents a significant step forward for the College's strategic oversight of its quality assurance procedures and has resulted in an evaluation of the content and processes of internal verification and standardisation, which has allowed for the identification of areas for further development and the sharing of good practice across the College.

1.53   The Dean of Academic Standards undertook a review of assessment processes across schools in May 2016. This highlighted good practice as well as a number of

inconsistencies in assessment processes and this led to a series of recommendations which were considered by SMT and disseminated to management and staff through the College's committees including SELT and the Leadership Forum.

1.54   As a result of this review a number of changes have been made to ensure that there is equity and consistency in the assessment process across schools. A standard assignment brief is now used for all assessments to ensure that there is clarity in the information given to students about the requirements of the assessment. Guidelines for feedback on assessed work require assessors to provide constructive feedback which is aligned to the marking criteria of the assignment. Schools are required to follow the clearly defined procedures for the internal verification process, and to use a standardised rubric for recording assessment decisions through plagiarism-detection software. Standard agendas are used for UABs and BoEs, and the Dean of Academic Standards attends these boards to ensure that there is consistency in the assessment practices across schools.

1.55   The Term Management Process Model (TMPM) continues to be used to monitor the assessment process within schools and this is audited by the Quality Manager and the Dean of Teaching of Learning. The review team scrutinised the most recent documentation covering the academic year 2015-16.

1.56   Internal verifiers approve summative assessment briefs and check that they test the learning outcomes. They moderate a standard sample of marked assessments. UABs are held in each school at the end of every term to consider and confirm the marks achieved for each unit. BoEs consider the performance of each student across the units they have attempted. MTBs monitor how students are progressing with the assessment for that term and provide an opportunity for students to give feedback on the assessment process.

1.57   All assignments are submitted through the virtual learning environment (VLE) (with the exception of the submission of portfolios in the School of Fashion). The College has a policy for the provision of formative and summative feedback on assessed work, and students confirmed that they received constructive feedback which explained how they could improve their grades.

1.58   The College closely monitors students' progress with assessments through the MTBs, and investigates the rate of submission for each assessment at the UABs. Extensive support is provided by tutors and through the Department of Learning and Enhancement (DALE) for students who are struggling to complete their assessments. This systematic approach to providing individualised support for students contributes to the feature of good practice identified under Expectation B3.

1.59   The College has implemented a progression policy which requires students to achieve four passes before progressing to year 2 of their programme. Those who have fewer than four passes but have submitted four assessments are permitted to provisionally progress pending submission within four weeks of reassessment for the units they have failed. The SMT believed that the progression policy has resulted in improvement in the submission and completion rates. However these remain low for some Schools. As reported under Expectation B3, the College would benefit from the more effective consideration of cross-College data relating to student retention, progression and achievement which would also provide robust evidence of the positive effects of the progression policy.

1.60   The policy and procedures of Pearson are used for the recognition of prior learning. However the College indicated that students wishing to take the Pearson HNDs are unlikely to apply for recognition of prior learning unless they have completed part of the diploma at another provider.

1.61   The College has a staff development strategy which is aligned with the mission and vision of the College, and includes supporting staff to carry out their role effectively in the assessment process. A mentoring process for new internal verifiers has been established to enable more teaching staff to participate effectively in the process. Twenty staff have achieved a level 3 assessors award. Staff are required to maintain up-to-date CVs indicating that they have the relevant qualifications to participate effectively in the assessment of students for the subjects they teach.

1.62   The awarding organisation, Pearson, continues to monitor the assessment procedures through Standards Verifier reports and the Academic Management Report. The Standards Verifier reports continue collectively to confirm that the assessment strategies in use are appropriate, that assessment outcomes are fairly judged, that internal verification processes and the organisation and management of programmes is effective. Furthermore they confirm that the College systems now in place are more robust and that they can see evidence that recommendations in their reports are being consistently addressed. The Quality Assurance Report (Quality System) shows that the effective operation of quality assurance systems is consistently reported to Academic Board.

1.63   The team concludes that the enhanced assessment processes introduced by the College following the QAA review in November 2015, which enable the College to maintain strategic oversight of the assessment processes across schools, and ensure that they are equitable, valid and reliable, demonstrate that the Expectation is met and that the level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code*, Chapter B7: External Examining*

Findings

1.64   Since the 2015 QAA review the College has appointed a Dean of Academic Standards, one of whose responsibilities is to ensure the proper treatment of Standards Verifier reports. The College has also tightened up its processes for ensuring Standards Verifier reports are fully discussed by Heads of Schools and course teams and that action plans are prepared, which are implemented and monitored.

1.65   Standards Verifier reports are now copied to the Dean of Academic Standards as well as Heads of Schools and course teams and an abridged version of the reports (Section A only) is made available to students on the College VLE.

1.66   The changes to the process for receiving, reading, analysing and producing action plans at both programme, School and College level, introduced since the original review visit allow for the Expectation to be met in principle.

1.67   The review team reviewed College documentation including the Dissemination Flowchart, a Standards Verifier action plan, and Standards Verifier reports and discussed the operation of the systems with senior staff (particularly the new Dean of Academic Standards), staff and students. The review team also considered course team meeting, SELT and SMT minutes.

1.68   The moderate risk identified in the original report related to the lack of systems for dealing with Standards Verifier reports at cross-College level and of the lack of a systematic process for making these reports available to students. The appointment of the new Dean and the introduction of the updated system for handling Standards Verifier reports ensures that Heads of School are required to produce an action plan in response to each report which applies at course level and are the result of discussion with course teams and students. These action plans are then sent to the Dean of Academic Standards who prepares a summary report which is discussed at SELT where good practice and issues requiring attention across the provision can be identified. Summary reports are then presented to SMT enabling senior managers to monitor the operation of the process and take informed action at strategic level as necessary.

1.69   Students who met the review team confirmed that they know that the Standards Verifier reports are available to them on the College VLE.

1.70   The College has introduced a robust system for ensuring that the SV reports are analysed for cross-College issues at a senior level and that that analysis is discussed in the new SELT and at SMT thus enabling strategic oversight and effective decision making. The Standards Verifier reports are now available to students. The review team therefore concludes that its original recommendation has been addressed and that the Expectation is met and the risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.71   The College continues to use the well-defined and established procedures of Pearson for programme monitoring and review. Since the original QAA review in November 2015, the College has enhanced this process by developing its own procedures for annual monitoring and review. Through these internal monitoring processes the College intends to take a strategic overview of the outcomes of the monitoring activities within Schools, by the awarding organisation and through other external bodies such as QAA.

1.72   The newly established internal monitoring processes of the College, together with the clearly defined monitoring requirements of Pearson enable the Expectation to be met in principle.

1.73   The review team scrutinised documentation relating to programme monitoring and review including the draft Annual Programme Monitoring Report for the College, hard copies of the TMPM folders, Standards Verifier reports, the Standards Verifier Reports Process for Action and Dissemination, the Academic Management Report from Pearson and the Terms of Reference and the minutes of PDEC. It met senior staff, members of the teaching staff and students to discuss how these processes are embedded into the operational and strategic management of programmes delivered by the College.

1.74   In response to recommendations from the previous QAA review visit in November 2015, the College has established the PDEC which takes responsibility for strategic oversight of programme development, programme withdrawal, changes to the curriculum and programme monitoring and review. However, this Committee is in the early stages of operation and has yet to make a significant impact on the management and monitoring of programmes.

1.75   The Term Management Process Model provides an effective and detailed system for monitoring programmes at the operational level within schools. Heads of School provide executive summaries of the outcomes of the TMPM process which feed into the Annual Programme Monitoring Report for the College. Students confirmed that they contribute to the monitoring and review processes through the feedback they provide at MTBs and through completing online surveys. The Student Council works with the Student Experience Team to monitor, review and enhance the learning experience. Students are represented on PDEC and so have an opportunity to discuss the outcomes of the College's monitoring processes.

1.76   The Standards Verification process, carried out by Pearson, provides external input into the programme monitoring process. Reports from Standards Verifiers are considered by SELT. These reports feed into the Academic Management Report produced by Pearson. The report for 2015-16 confirmed that the College has effective policies and procedures for managing the quality of the learning experience, and made no recommendations for improvement.

1.77   The outcomes of the internal and external monitoring processes are summarised in the Annual College Programme Monitoring Report which is designed to capture cross-College themes identified through the monitoring process within schools and across programmes. The College has produced the first such report covering 2015-16. At the time

of the review visit the report was in draft format and had not been fully discussed by the College's deliberative committees. However, senior management indicated that the annual monitoring process would be used to influence future programme development, make comparisons across schools and evaluate the effectiveness of the new procedures.

1.78   The College has effective procedures in place for closing programmes and for managing out students on programmes which have been withdrawn, and has implemented this process for a number of programmes, including the HN programme in Law which was the subject of a now resolved Concerns investigation by QAA.

1.79   The College uses Pearson and the outcomes of QAA reviews as reference points for programme monitoring and review. It also uses the FHEQ and Subject Benchmark Statements, which are aligned to the programme specifications as a further external reference point.

1.80   Staff who are external examiners for other higher education organisations provide external expertise for the monitoring and review process. Two members of staff have been given time to assist with the review and development of programmes for other providers to enable them to use this experience to inform the College's own monitoring processes.

1.81   The College has responded to the recommendations in the previous report following the QAA review visit in November 2015 by establishing its own internal processes for programme monitoring and review which identify cross-College themes for development and support the sharing of good practice. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met as the College now has effective processes for programme monitoring and review which demonstrate a shared understanding of the purpose and nature of programme monitoring which involves students, staff and other stakeholders. In the light of the College's own processes, and the systematic monitoring and review processes which continue to be implemented by the awarding organisation, the Expectation is met and the risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.82   Since the QAA review in November 2015, the College has implemented modified and updated appeals and complaints procedures. Information regarding appeals and complaints is available in student and staff handbooks, which are easily accessible on the College website. The complaints and appeals policies are fair and completed within agreed timescales. These provisions enable the Expectation to be met in principle.

1.83   In testing the Expectation, the review team considered the revised appeals and complaints procedures, in addition to staff and student handbooks and relevant meeting minutes. The team met academic and support staff and students to discuss appeals and student complaints.

1.84   At the review visit in November 2015, the College was recommended to 'monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of its complaints procedures, and use the outcomes for development and enhancement purposes'. The College has subsequently developed a new committee (SELT) as part of a revised committee organisation. This committee considers Complaints Committee minutes and outcomes, the results of which are overseen by the College SMT.

1.85   The Complaints Procedure provides an overview of the formal and informal stages, with information for students set out in the student handbook. The procedure is guided by a number of principles - all complaints are treated sensitively and full consideration is given to maintaining confidentiality. The Director of Student Services oversees complaints procedures. Guidance regarding complaints policies and procedures is also made available to staff within the Staff Handbook, including whom to contact regarding complaints.

1.86   Tables in both staff and student handbooks detail the timescales for formal and informal complaint resolution. Opportunities for informal resolution are offered, with students advised to contact a member of the Student Services Team. When submitting a formal complaint, students are required to submit a formal Complaints Form, available from the Student Services Office or on the VLE. The complaint must be given in writing within four weeks of the cause for complaint. Formal complaints are reviewed by the Complaints and Grievance Committee (CAGC) to assess the nature of the complaint and to assign it to Heads of Schools if an academic matter, and to the CAGC if a non-academic matter.

1.87   The Complaints Committee oversees the effectiveness of the College complaints procedures, maintains records of complaint outcomes and makes decisions on individual cases. The Dean of Teaching and Learning chairs the Complaints Committee, with the Directors of Student Services and Student Experience also members. A Complaints Committee report is discussed at each SELT meeting and staff who met the review team confirmed that the report examines cross-College data. Meeting minutes indicate that complaints received had been more verbal in nature, with the majority of complaints citing difficulties understanding lecturers' accents. The committee actions recommended lecturers offer hand-outs at the beginning of the class and try to speak more slowly while students initially adjust to lecturers' intonation at the start of the year.

1.88   A further recommendation of the 2015 QAA review was for the College to 'design and implement a clear, accessible and robust academic appeal procedure, which identifies each stage of the appeal process to staff and students, the responsibilities for decision making and the options available to challenge the outcome of an appeal through external bodies'. The new College Academic Appeals procedure is easily available to students within the student handbook, and is clearly outlined with a flowchart in the staff handbook.

1.89   To appeal a grade, students must do so within two weeks of the result being posted on the college VLE. Students are initially encouraged to contact the marker and discuss their concerns informally. If still unresolved the student can complete an Academic Appeals Form available from Academic Administration. The student must be able to demonstrate with clear reasoning why they should be awarded a higher grade. The corresponding Head of School arranges for a second lecturer to mark the assignment, providing reasoning for the mark within a week of receiving the student's work. If in agreement with the second marker the grade stands; if a new grade is awarded, Academic Administration is informed. The grade is altered on the College VLE and the student informed by the Academic Administration Team. If still unresolved the Head of School will make the final decision regarding academic appeals, a procedure which was confirmed by staff at the review. Students who met the review team were clear about the appeals procedure.

1.90   However, the College does not yet have any provision in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the newly revised academic appeals process. As a result, the College cannot capably measure the success or quality of their appeals procedures, or appraise the consistency of the judgements made by Heads of Schools. It is therefore **recommended** that the College implements a strategic College-wide monitoring and evaluation of Heads of Schools' academic appeals decisions.

1.91   For both complaints and academic appeals which have not been resolved satisfactorily through the College's internal procedures, students have the right of access to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. This is understood by both staff and students.

1.92   The review team is satisfied that the College has implemented a clear and easily available academic appeals procedure and that it monitors the effectiveness of complaints procedures for enhancement purposes. While further steps are required to introduce effective monitoring of academic appeals decisions by Heads of Schools, this does not compromise the review team's conclusion that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B10): Degree-awarding bodies take ultimate responsibility for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities, irrespective of where these are delivered or who provides them. Arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with organisations other than the degree-awarding body are implemented securely and managed effectively.

Quality Code, *Chapter B10: Managing Higher Education Provision with Others*

Findings

1.93   The College continues to offer the HND Health and Social Care which includes a mandatory 200-hour work-placement element which contributes to the achievement of the learning outcomes of the programme. Other than this arrangement, the College is not formally involved in working with others as defined in the Expectation.

1.94   Students either find their own work placement, are already in a work setting when they commence the programme, or they receive help from the College. In 2015-16 this help was provided through a formal arrangement with Capita, which has a national database of care homes and approaches institutions requesting work experience opportunities for students. Capita was informed of the College requirements and undertook visits to premises. College lecturers themselves have professional links with care homes and trusts.

1.95   The quality of the work placement learning experience is assured through a combination of logs of the work experience being undertaken and attendance registers signed off by the placement provider and College staff. Each student maintains a portfolio, which includes information about the tasks to be achieved, a job description, personal development plan, work-placement diary and a reflective essay.

1.96   At the end of each placement, both the placement provider and the College confirm that the required learning opportunity has been delivered and the specified number of hours completed. A Pearson Standards Verifier also inspects the logs and conducts audits. Although professional work-place monitoring is undertaken, placement staff are not involved in summative assessment.

1.97   The review team was able to confirm that the arrangements in place at the time of the original review continue to be valid and to confirm the original finding that the 'work experience placement process works consistently well under capable direction and care from placement staff and institutional supervisors. The student portfolio is well categorised, detailed, reflective and evaluative. The review team found that the placement work experience element of the programme is mature and well organised and managed'. Therefore, this review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B11): Research degrees are awarded in a research environment that provides secure academic standards for doing research and learning about research approaches, methods, procedures and protocols.
This environment offers students quality of opportunities and the support they need to achieve successful academic, personal and professional outcomes from their research degrees.

Quality Code, *Chapter B11: Research Degrees*

Findings

1.98   The College does not offer research degrees and therefore this Expectation is not applicable.

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

1.99   In reaching its judgement about the quality of student learning opportunities at the College, the review team matched its findings to the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook and considered the progress the College has made against its action plan devised in response to the original review carried out in November 2015.

1.100   The review team concludes that the two features of good practice identified in that original review remain in place, and potentially have been further extended through more intensive monitoring of individual student performance and tailored support informed by performance data, and through extending further the range of opportunities for engaging students as partners.

1.101   In comparison with the original review, the review team found that all 10 of the applicable Expectations were now met, in each case with the associated risk being low. Five recommendations were made, but these were considered not to be substantial enough to affect the finding that each Expectation was met with low associated risk. In each case they were matters where the College could continue to demonstrate the progress it was making in delivering learning opportunities rather than significant threats to those learning opportunities.

1.102   The five recommendations relate to the link between the College's strategy for new programmes and the information provided publicly about its academic portfolio; the information provided for prospective students about the right of appeal against admissions decisions; the provision of guidance to students about future higher education study opportunities beyond HN levels; the use of cross-College strategic level progression, achievement and retention data; and the College-level monitoring of decisions made by Heads of Schools in academic appeals cases.

1.103   Based on the progress made by the College since the original review and the review team's findings that all 10 applicable Expectations are met, the review team concludes that the quality of learning opportunities **meets** UK Expectations.

2   Judgement: The enhancement of student learning opportunities

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

Findings

2.1   The College's enhancement strategy provides a framework for the College to take deliberate steps, at the strategic level, to drive enhancement initiatives throughout the College. It is underpinned by revised strategies for learning and teaching, assessment, portfolio development, widening participation and staff development. The College monitors enhancement through the newly constituted Student Enhancement and Learning and Teaching Committee (SELT).

2.2   The enhancement strategy is in its early stages of development, but provides a clear structure for the College to take deliberate steps to enhance the quality of the student experience, and is designed to act as a driver for sharing good practice and enhancement initiatives. The strategic framework with the five underpinning strategies supports enhancement and enables the Expectation to be met in principle.

2.3   The review team tested the Expectation by examining the Strategic Framework and reviewing the implementation of the five strategies which underpin the College's processes for enhancement. It examined the evidence provided by the College of various enhancement activities and scrutinised the minutes of the relevant committees which drive the enhancement processes, including SMT and SELT. The team met members of the SMT, teaching staff, Student Services and the Student Council.

2.4   Since the review in November 2015, the College has critically evaluated the extent to which deliberate steps to enhance the quality of the student learning experience are strategically driven. The revised strategic framework uses enhancement as the overarching strategy for teaching and learning, assessment, portfolio development, widening participation and staff development. The College has used the action plan created in response to the QAA review visit effectively to identify opportunities for enhancement and has implemented changes which have enhanced student learning opportunities in a systematic and planned manner.

2.5   The new developments and enhancements implemented by the College include establishing the SELT Committee which monitors enhancement activities across the College. The revised staff development strategy has provided opportunities for staff to enhance their teaching and assessment skills and gain teaching qualifications. The College plans to support staff to become Fellows of the HEA and is organising a workshop to support staff with their applications.

2.6   The staff conference held in August 2016 focused on enhancement and provided an opportunity for the identification and dissemination of good practice. The VLE has been updated and now provides specific features to support students enrolled through the College's widening participation strategy. The College has also organised careers fairs and careers workshops to enhance the employment prospects of students and a schools Liaison and Engagement Manager has been appointed to support the College's mission of widening participation.

2.7   The recently constituted Student Council works with the College to provide further enhancement of learning opportunities through a programme of extracurricular activities and support for students.

2.8   The College has recently moved to a prestigious building with improved teaching and learning facilities and this is a further example of the College taking deliberate steps to enhance the quality of the student learning experience. Students spoke positively about the responsiveness of the College to student needs, and confirmed that the College continually encourages the enhancement of student learning opportunities.

2.9   Heads of School identify opportunities for enhancement which are discussed at the meetings of SELT. These are supported and encouraged by the SMT. The College plans to review its enhancement strategy as part of its annual monitoring process, and the SMT confirmed that it intended to continue to use the College action plan as a live document to support enhancement.

2.10   The review team concludes that the College takes a strategic approach to the enhancement of student learning opportunities which is systematically planned and monitored through its revised committee structure. The Expectation is therefore met and the risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.11   In reaching its judgement about the enhancement of student learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook and considered the progress the College has made against its action plan devised in response to the original review carried out in November 2015.

2.12   In the original review the review team concluded that although there was no evidence that enhancement was being clearly driven at the strategic level, the College did recognise the need for enhancement. Since then the College has put in place arrangements for that strategic level drive, evidenced through a number of College-wide initiatives and staff and students demonstrated ways in which the College's planned approach has led to improvements in learning and teaching.

2.13   The review team therefore concludes that the enhancement of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

Glossary

This glossary is a quick-reference guide to terms in this report that may be unfamiliar to some readers. Definitions of key operational terms are also given on pages 22-25 of the Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) handbook

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

e-learning
See technology enhanced or enabled learning

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Multiple awards
An arrangement where three or more **degree-awarding bodies** together provide a single jointly delivered **programme** (or programmes) leading to a separate **award** (and separate certification) of each awarding body. The arrangement is the same as for **dual/double awards**, but with three or more awarding bodies being involved.

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

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

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

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.

Self-evaluation document
A report submitted by a higher education provider, assessing its own performance, to be used as evidence in a QAA review.

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

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

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

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

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