



Access College

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

September 2012

Key findings about Access College

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in September 2012, the QAA review team (the team) considers that there can be **no confidence** in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of the Association of Business Executives, Association of Certified Chartered Accountants, the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, the Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality, Edexcel and the Organisation for Tourism and Hospitality Management.

The team also considers that there can be **no confidence** in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the quality and enhancement of the learning opportunities it offers on behalf of these awarding organisations.

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

Recommendations

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

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

- implement comprehensive, robust and effective policies for the management of academic standards and learning opportunities (paragraphs 1.1-1.3 and 2.1)
- ensure that the Academic Board and the Academic Staff Meeting operate according to their terms of reference and membership (paragraph 1.2 and 2.2)
- rigorously apply its policy on academic misconduct (paragraph 1.4)
- operate an examination board for the Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership as required by Edexcel (paragraph 1.9)
- effectively analyse retention, achievement and success data at cohort and programme level, and take appropriate action to address low retention and achievement rates (paragraph 2.2)
- implement a learning and teaching strategy relevant to its higher education programmes (paragraphs 2.4 and 2.5)
- provide students with more detailed and useful written feedback on their formative assignments (paragraph 2.6).
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The team considers that it is **advisable** for the provider to:

- ensure that, in line with Edexcel recommendations, students are provided with assignment tasks which contextualise the assessment criteria (paragraph 1.5)
- implement an effective process for the consideration of external reports (paragraph 1.8)
- provide students with opportunities to be more involved in Academic Board and Academic Staff Meeting (paragraph 2.9)
- provide staff development activities that support the delivery of higher education programmes (paragraph 2.11)
- review its procedures for quality assuring and managing the quality of public information (paragraph 3.5).

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

- consider ways to engage academic staff with the Academic Infrastructure (paragraph 1.6).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the Review for Educational Oversight¹ (REO) conducted by QAA at Access College (the provider; the College). The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the provider discharges its stated responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes of study that the provider delivers on behalf of the Association of Business Executives, Association of Certified Chartered Accountants, the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, the Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality, Edexcel and the Organisation for Tourism and Hospitality Management. The review was carried out by Mr David Malachi, Professor Danny Morton, Mr Charles Sanders, Mrs Maz Stewart (reviewers), and Mr Philip Markey (coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook.² The review of Access College formed part of a joint review with the three other colleges owned by Access Education Ltd. Evidence in support of the review included the College's own internal reports from the Academic Board and departmental meetings, external examiners' reports and reports from the awarding organisations. Reports from the Accreditation Service for International Colleges were also available. The team also made use of evidence from meetings with staff and students.

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

- the Academic Infrastructure
- the reference points provided by the awarding organisations.

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

Access College was formed in September 2009 and is one of four colleges owned by Access Education Ltd. The College is located in the centre of Wimbledon. It achieved Stage 2 approval from the Accreditation Service for International Colleges in May 2010. Its management is also responsible for three other colleges located in West Wimbledon, Kingston upon Thames and Leicester. All four colleges were visited during the review period. Access College has 338 full-time higher education students. It has an agreement with the University of Roehampton for students to progress to its MBA and with the Management Development Partnership to deliver a BSc (Top Up) award of the University of the West of England, Bristol.

The management system is common for all four colleges. The team met management staff who are responsible for all four colleges, and the Academic Director, who will teach on the higher education programmes when they run. The report is written on the review of the systems that the College has in place for its higher education provision and how this relates to the requirements of the awarding organisations.

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

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

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

Association of Business Executives

- Diploma in Business Administration (17)
- Diploma in Human Resource Management (1)
- Diploma in Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Management (1)

Association of Certified Chartered Accountants

- Certified Chartered Accountant (259)

Chartered Institute of Management Accountants

- Certificate/Diploma/Advanced Diploma/level 7 (34)

Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality

- Postgraduate Diploma in Hospitality and Tourism (2)

Edexcel

- Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership (4)

Organisation for Tourism and Hospitality Management

- Diploma in Tourism and Hospitality Management (10)

The provider's stated responsibilities

The College is responsible for delivering programmes that are devised by the awarding organisations. For Edexcel programmes, the College sets and marks assignments. For all other programmes, assessments are set externally, with the College supporting students in assessments set by the awarding organisations. The College sets formative assignments to prepare students for external examinations and is responsible for marking, moderating and providing feedback to students. With respect to all other responsibilities, the College manages its student recruitment and support, learning resources, the monitoring of the quality of learning and teaching, collecting and acting upon student opinion, staff development and the accuracy of public information.

Recent developments

There have been no recent developments since the submission of the College's self-evaluation.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on higher education programmes at the provider were invited to present a submission to the review team. A submission was provided. This was produced from students' answers to a questionnaire devised by and interpreted by staff. Students also met the coordinator at the preparatory meeting and met the review team and coordinator during the visit.

Detailed findings about Access College

1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The operation of the key management committees and the policies on which these are based are in need of improvement. The College management structure comprises a Principal, Centre Manager, Curriculum Development Manager, Quality Compliance Manager, and directors of study. The Centre Manager is responsible for overseeing the operational management of the College. The Curriculum Development Manager and the Quality Compliance Manager have overall responsibility for curriculum delivery and quality compliance across the four colleges within the consortium. The colleges work to a common Policy Manual, which addresses all issues associated with the maintenance of academic standards within the colleges. An Academic Board collectively represents all four colleges and, according to its terms of reference, membership comprises directors of study, the Curriculum Development Manager and the Centre Manager. The Principal was also present at all meetings recorded. The overall remit of the Academic Board is to ensure that the College's quality assurance processes are in line with standards set out by each awarding partner. The College also operates an Academic Staff Meeting, whose duties are stated to include receiving monthly course reviews and considering individual student progress reports from lecturers. The monthly course reports have not yet been produced or considered by this meeting.

1.2 Academic Board meetings minutes from January 2011 to March 2012 are cursory in their approach to the management of academic standards and provide little evidence that important issues, as defined within its terms of reference, are being addressed. For example, there is no consideration of trend analysis of cohort retention, achievement or progression. The Board does not follow its own terms of reference in respect of monitoring academic policies and reviewing academic standards. The membership requirements of the Board are not fulfilled. Many key decisions are taken informally and outside of the structure defined within the College's policies. In order to maintain effective oversight of academic standards, it is essential that the College ensures that the Academic Board and the Academic Staff Meeting operate according to their terms of reference and membership.

1.3 The College operates with the same policy documents and procedures used by the other three colleges. Some policies are not being applied effectively and some are copies from other education institutions, which are inappropriate for the College. For example, the Staff Development Policy includes references to features that do not exist at the College. The Resources Policy is based on a study support centre delivering levels 2 and 3. The procedure for monitoring academic progress is not comprehensive because the document refers only to progress of individual students and not to cohort trend analysis. The College has not produced an annual course review report for all its programmes, which was a recommendation in the Accreditation Service for International Colleges report (2010). The team is, therefore, unable to confirm that all policies are fit for purpose for the management and oversight of academic standards. It is essential that the College implements comprehensive, robust and effective policies for the management of academic standards.

1.4 The College has an academic misconduct policy which clearly describes the students' responsibility to ensure that work submitted for assessment is their own and is not plagiarised. Students are required to sign confirmation of their understanding of this policy when commencing their studies. The College also has access to a commercial plagiarism

package, which checks for plagiarism against a national database. Despite these documented procedures, there are instances of academic malpractice in some formative assignment work that has not been identified by staff or dealt with appropriately. Students have not been made aware of their errors through the feedback on their work. It is essential that the College rigorously applies its policy on academic misconduct.

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

1.5 The College is dependent on its awarding organisations for ensuring that programmes meet the expectations of external reference points associated with programme delivery and assessment. It does not have any direct involvement in the design of new programmes. For the delivery of the level 7 Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership, the College is guided by the qualification specification supplied by Edexcel. Assignment tasks do not provide a scenario on which to base the activity, contrary to Edexcel guidance. It is advisable that the College ensures that, in line with Edexcel recommendations, students are provided with assignment tasks which are based on a realistic scenario that reflects relevant work-based contexts.

1.6 The College has a policy document entitled Academic Infrastructure, which describes its responsibilities for engaging with external reference points. Staff at the College showed little awareness of this policy. While some staff had attended QAA briefings in preparation for the review, there was no evidence of any relevant staff development being undertaken within the College. There is no evidence that the College's policies and procedures have been informed by the UK Academic Infrastructure. For example, effective course monitoring and review does not take place in line with the expectations of the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education, Section 7: Programme design, approval, monitoring and review*. It is desirable for the College to consider ways to engage staff with the Academic Infrastructure.

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

1.7 The College receives reports from the external verifier for its Edexcel programme. The report addresses the management of academic standards and lists actions for the College to address. Since the centre is newly established, only one report was available at the time of the visit, which is generally supportive of the College. At the time of the review, the College had not considered or responded to the report.

1.8 For other programmes of study, the external examiner reports provided by the awarding organisations are generic and address the overall response to specific questions by all students taking the examination. This does make it difficult for the College to identify its own students. There is consequently no comment on student performance specific to the College. External reports are available for all programmes except for those from the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants. However, there is no evidence that these are considered at either the Academic Board or Academic Staff Meeting. It is advisable that the College implements a process for the consideration of external reports.

1.9 The College is not required to hold assessment boards for those programmes where summative assessments are marked by the awarding organisation. For the Edexcel programme, it is a requirement for an Examination Board to be held. An Examination Board is included in the management structure. However, students have submitted summative assignments, but no formal examination board has taken place. The College's Assessment Process Policy does not refer to the role of the Examination Board in ratifying student results. It is essential that the College operates the examination board for the Diploma in

Strategic Management and Leadership, as required by Edexcel.

The review team has **no confidence** in the provider's management of its responsibilities for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of its awarding organisations.

2 Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1 Paragraphs 1.1 to 1.3 also relate to the management and enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities. There is an over reliance on informal structures to support the management and enhancement of learning opportunities. Managers rely on informal communications to discuss issues relating to learning opportunities. The policy documents are not all fit for purpose or relevant to the College's provision.

2.2 The College has a procedure for monitoring the academic progress of students through a data management system, which is monitored by the Director of Studies. Students may be given warnings and may be expelled, where their performance continues to be unsatisfactory. There is some recording of individual student progress, but there is insufficient monitoring of cohort progression, achievement and success. The data available to the team indicated that some programmes have high withdrawal and low success rates. The College was unable to provide the team with accurate cohort progression data or demonstrate that they had undertaken any analysis of the data at programme level. This issue was also noted in the Accreditation Service for International Colleges report (2010). It is essential that the College effectively analyses retention, achievement and success data at programme and cohort level, and takes appropriate action to address low retention and achievement rates.

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

2.3 Paragraphs 1.5 to 1.6 also relate to the use of external reference points in the management and enhancement of learning opportunities.

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

2.4 The teaching staff have appropriate vocational/professional qualifications. There is a policy for teacher observation. Teaching observations are undertaken by the Director of Studies and the Academic Manager, although neither has received formal training in teaching observation at higher education level. Only four out of 18 prompts for staff observation focus on student learning; the rest are concerned with teacher performance. Lesson observation sheets provide little comment on the student experience. There is no evidence that student evaluations are used to provide information on learning and teaching, although the terms of reference for the Academic Staff Meeting state that they should be considered.

2.5 The College's policy document on learning and teaching is a copy of a policy of a secondary school, and is inappropriate for higher education. For example, it makes no reference to higher-level skills. It does not refer to academic study skills relevant to study in the UK, and how the UK expectations may be different to other countries. It also refers to a coaching and modelling team, which does not exist. Schemes of work and lesson plans are

brief and demonstrate very limited teaching and learning methods. The schemes of work also do not demonstrate a progressive increase in the level of challenge. It is essential that the College implements a learning and teaching strategy relevant to its higher education programmes.

2.6 Students reported that the oral feedback they receive on formative feedback was helpful. However, written feedback on individual assignments is cursory and provides little meaningful support to students. Second marking provides no additional support to the students. Students are provided with reports that comment briefly on their overall progress, but these do provide comment on individual assignments. The lack of detailed constructive written formative feedback does not adequately prepare students for external examinations. It is essential that the College ensures that it provides students with more detailed and useful written feedback on their formative assignments.

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

2.7 The College effectively supports its students. A range of appropriate student support policies and procedures are in place, including those for student selection, application and admissions, and induction. All students are recruited and interviewed prior to admission, either by overseas agents or by a member of the Senior Management Team to ensure enrolment on the most appropriate programme of study. On arrival at the College, all students complete a comprehensive programme of induction, supported by an induction pack. Students are assessed on arrival at the College to ensure that they are enrolled on the appropriate programme, although this process operates informally.

2.8 Group tutorial sessions take place each week as part of the learning programme. Student welfare matters are dealt with effectively. The Quality Compliance Manager acts as Student Welfare Officer and oversees welfare activity undertaken by various administrative and academic staff. Students report that welfare issues are normally dealt with quickly, positively and in a helpful manner. This informal approach means that some welfare issues and associated actions are not always recorded in student files. Students report that they feel well supported by College staff, with programme leaders taking a substantive role.

2.9 Student feedback is collected through use of questionnaires at the end of each semester and students indicate satisfaction with the outcomes of this process. While the terms of reference for the Academic Staff Meeting state that student evaluations should be considered, there is no evidence in the minutes that this has taken place. This was a recommendation in the Accreditation Service for International Colleges report (2010). Students do not take part in either of the Academic Board or Academic Staff Meeting. Student participation would provide the College with more information on the students' learning experiences. It is advisable that the College provides students with opportunities to be more involved in the Academic Board and Academic Staff Meeting.

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

2.10 The College provides an induction programme for staff, which aims to ensure understanding and compliance of their duties and responsibilities towards students and the College. There is a comprehensive staff induction pack, which provides relevant information about their role and duties. All staff should have a contact person who will advise and counsel them during the first three months of employment.

2.11 The College has a Staff Development Policy, which is committed to ensuring appropriate professional development. This is based on a policy from another higher

education institution, and includes information not relevant to this College. The College also appraises staff annually, although it is not clear how this informs staff development.

The College stresses the vocational and professional nature of its programmes, with staff being academically competent in their respective areas, resulting in relatively few staff holding teaching qualifications on arrival. The College supports staff in obtaining teaching qualifications. Several staff have recently completed the Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector and Diploma to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector qualifications. Many staff also benefit from updating and development activities with the awarding organisations. Most teaching staff are members of professional bodies relevant to their areas of teaching. To date, no members of staff are members of the Higher Education Academy or involved in research or scholarship. It is advisable that the College provides staff development activities that support the delivery of higher education programmes.

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

2.12 The majority of College awarding organisations partners provide a wide range of online learning materials specific to their professional area, including e-journals, training manuals, articles and past examination papers. Students have access to these materials through the three College computer rooms and can also use their own laptops, tablet computers and smart phones through the College wireless network. Upon registration with the awarding organisation, students can access these learning materials remotely through the internet, which they consider highly valuable for supporting their studies.

2.13 One computer suite is reserved primarily for online practice and sitting external examinations. Library provision links closely to the academic programmes and is sufficient for the requirements of students. The College directs students to further learning resources and facilities that are available at the nearby public library. A College virtual learning environment is in development, through which the College will make learning materials for students more readily accessible through one unified portal. The system has recently been successfully piloted with some student groups and will be released college-wide later this academic year.

2.14 The College has a Resource Policy, but it lacks coherence and clarity for higher education programmes. It is based on that of a secondary school. For example, it refers to a Study Support Centre that does not exist and has a section on the promotion of reading in schools, rather than matters relevant for a college delivering higher education programmes. It is also unclear how priorities for the provision and enhancement of learning resources are determined through either the Academic Staff Meeting, the Academic Board or other planning meetings (see paragraph 1.2).

The review team has **no confidence** that the provider is fulfilling its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of the intended learning opportunities it provides for students.

3 Public information

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

3.1 At the time of review, the College demonstrated that it provided broadly accurate information to prospective students, although some minor inaccuracies can be found in various sections of the website. Information provided to students takes the form of publications produced by the College and its awarding organisations. Accountability for the accuracy of information remains the responsibility of the originating source. The College generally adheres to the branding guidelines of its awarding organisations, and promotional literature demonstrates this.

3.2 The College website provides general information about the College and its programmes. References are made to relevant College policies and procedures. Some information overstates the facilities provided by the College, for example its library facilities and the extent of information technology available to students.

3.3 Student course handbooks incorporate generic information provided by the awarding organisations, are not suitably contextualised to the College, and do not contain sufficiently detailed programme information. Grammatical errors feature in the majority of College-produced documentation. Some of the information contained in the Student Handbook does not accurately reflect services provided, for example reference is made to a College counselling service. This service provides access to a welfare officer, who is the Quality Compliance Manager, rather than a professional counsellor.

3.4 Information provided to staff is insufficient in depth and detail to enable them to assure that they are maintaining academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities. Information for staff is largely descriptive. The College's published quality processes and procedures do not make any reference to the Academic Infrastructure or other external reference points.

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

3.5 The College has a policy for assuring the reliability and validity of public information, but it is not robust. The process for assuring public information is informal and inaccuracies are identified as and when they are brought to the attention of the College. Processes to ensure that inaccuracies are rectified are ad hoc rather than proactive or subject to systematic review. Responsibility for the accuracy of information remains the responsibility of two key staff. There is no procedure for documenting decisions and outcomes relating to the quality assurance of public information. It is advisable that the College reviews its procedures for quality assuring and managing the quality of public information.

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

Action plan³

Access College action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight September 2012						
Essential	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The review team considers that it is essential for the provider to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> implement comprehensive, robust and effective policies for the management of academic standards and learning opportunities (paragraphs 1.1-1.3 and 2.1) 	<p>Check and update all policies and procedures in these areas</p> <p>Remove plagiarism from policies and procedures</p> <p>Quality and Compliance Manager will double-check all policies and procedures once updated</p> <p>Embed revised policies and procedures through staff training and monitoring</p> <p>Monthly programme</p>	April 2013	<p>Academic Board</p> <p>External Management Consultant</p> <p>Quality and Compliance Manager</p>	<p>Updated policies and procedures</p> <p>Staff awareness</p>	Principal	Use annual monitoring routine to check reception and operation of key policies

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

	<p>reviews and progress reports from lecturers will be produced and considered by the Academic Staff Meeting</p> <p>The Principal will ensure that all policies are applied</p> <p>The procedure for monitoring academic progress will include cohort analysis</p> <p>The College will produce an overview annual monitoring report for all its programmes as recommended by the Accreditation Service for International College report (2010)</p> <p>The Academic Board will monitor its compliance with its own terms of reference in respect of membership, monitoring academic policies, and reviewing academic</p>					
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	standards All key decisions will be taken formally and within the structure defined within the College's policies					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that the Academic Board and the Academic Staff Meeting operate according to their terms of reference and membership (paragraphs 1.2 and 2.2) 	<p>Immediate update of terms of reference and membership of boards</p> <p>Updating to include rationalisation - identifying specific purposes for each committee and appropriate meeting frequencies and reporting lines</p> <p>Operate all meetings accordingly</p>	February 2013	<p>Academic Board</p> <p>Quality and Compliance Manager</p>	Meeting minutes will show evidence of changes	Principal	<p>Academic Board meeting minutes</p> <p>Specific single-agenda Academic Board meeting to discuss success of the actions</p> <p>Academic Staff Meeting minutes with action points</p> <p>Quality Manual</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rigorously apply its policy on academic misconduct (paragraph 1.4) 	<p>Rewrite the policy on academic misconduct and the Quality and Compliance Manager will double-check it</p> <p>Briefings for staff and students to be held and repeated</p> <p>The College will apply</p>	March 2013	<p>External Management Consultant</p> <p>Quality and Compliance Manager</p> <p>Director of Studies</p>	Updated policies and procedures	Principal Academic Board	<p>Student coursework (formative assignments) - moderation/double marking</p> <p>Mock exams</p>

	<p>the policy and continuously check its implementation</p> <p>Academic misconduct reports will become a standing agenda item for the Academic Board</p>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> operate an examination board for the Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership as required by Edexcel (paragraph 1.9) 	<p>The College will develop terms of reference for the examination board, with appropriate membership and reporting line</p> <p>Edexcel examination board will be added in College assessment process</p> <p>Discussions about Edexcel Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership will be recorded in our Academic Board meetings and Academic Staff Meeting</p>	February 2013	Director of Studies	<p>Updated examination board</p> <p>Academic Board minutes</p>	Academic Board	<p>Management structure</p> <p>Academic Board minutes</p> <p>Academic Staff Meeting minutes</p> <p>Evidence from minutes of an examination board</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> effectively analyse retention, achievement and 	New module will be added to retrieve retention,	April 2013	IT Manager Analysing the	20 per cent module has been programmed,	Principal Academic Board	Student Management System

<p>success data at cohort and programme level, and take appropriate action to address low retention and achievement rates (paragraph 2.2)</p>	<p>achievement and success data</p> <p>Analysing progression data by programme facility will be also added in the Student Management System</p> <p>The Academic Board will commission analysis of the data, which is the point of the recommendation</p>		<p>data: working party of the Academic Board</p> <p>Analysis considered by the Academic Board</p> <p>Responsibility for acting on the data rests with the Academic Board through its officers</p>	<p>80 per cent will be completed by end of December 2012</p> <p>Full implementation will be done in January 2013</p>	<p>Director of Studies</p>	<p>Reports will be generated periodically on the data with action points</p> <p>Evaluation to be made by the Academic Board of the effectiveness of this new system following next receipt of achievement data</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> implement a learning and teaching strategy relevant to its higher education programmes (paragraphs 2.4 and 2.5) 	<p>The College will rewrite the policy on learning and teaching strategy and Quality and Compliance Manager will double-check it</p> <p>The Director of Studies will apply the policy and will keep checking its implementation every two months</p> <p>Senior managers to be trained in offering feedback to teaching staff</p>	<p>April 2013</p>	<p>External Management Consultant</p> <p>Quality and Compliance Manager</p> <p>Director of Studies</p> <p>Teaching staff</p>	<p>Updated policies and procedures</p>	<p>Principal Academic Board</p>	<p>Student coursework (formative assignments)</p> <p>Teacher's observation procedure</p> <p>Mock exams</p> <p>Student evaluations</p>

	Teaching staff to be briefed and rebriefed on expectations					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide students with more detailed and useful written feedback on their formative assignments (paragraph 2.6). 	<p>Written feedback on formative assignment sheet has been designed and will be in use from January 2013</p> <p>Checks every two months by the Quality and Compliance Manager</p> <p>Enhancement of the quality of feedback by formalisation of requirements on the feedback form and by repeated staff briefing, oral and written</p>	January 2013	<p>Director of Studies</p> <p>Heads of department</p> <p>Teachers</p>	New feedback forms showing that they are in use	<p>Academic Board</p> <p>Quality and Compliance Manager</p>	<p>Student coursework (formative assignments)</p> <p>Mock exams</p> <p>Report by the Quality and Compliance Manager on the effectiveness of the new process, to be considered by the Academic Board</p>
Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is advisable for the provider to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that, in line with Edexcel recommendations, students are provided with assignment tasks which contextualise 	Students will be provided with assignment tasks which are based on a realistic scenario that reflects relevant work-based contexts	January 2013	<p>Heads of department</p> <p>Teachers</p>	Assignment brief has been designed and implemented	Director of Studies	<p>Assignment brief</p> <p>Student assignments contextualise scenarios</p>

<p>the assessment criteria (paragraph 1.5)</p>	<p>Format of assignment brief has already been created</p> <p>Staff to be briefed and rebriefed orally and in writing</p> <p>This will be implemented from January 2013</p>					<p>Student evaluations</p> <p>External examiner feedback</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> implement an effective process for the consideration of external reports (paragraph 1.8) 	<p>The College will implement an effective process for external reports</p> <p>The College will consider external reports (for example external examiner reports, awarding organisation reports, British Accreditation Council, or QAA reports) at the Academic Board</p> <p>The College management and teaching staff will consider the implications of the external reports for how higher education is managed and</p>	<p>March 2013</p>	<p>Teachers</p>	<p>Evidence of reports and meeting minutes</p>	<p>Academic Board</p> <p>Director of Studies</p>	<p>Academic Board meetings with action points</p> <p>Academic Staff Meeting</p> <p>Teaching and learning procedure</p>

	<p>delivered, and take action</p> <p>Any action taken in response to external reports should be monitored and evaluated by the Academic Board</p> <p>The reports will be shared with student representatives</p> <p>Academic Staff Meeting will also discuss such reports</p>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide students with opportunities to be more involved in the Academic Board and Academic Staff Meeting (paragraph 2.9) 	<p>A student representative system will be implemented from January 2013 in Academic Staff Meeting and also Academic Board meetings</p>	January 2013	<p>Academic Board</p> <p>Director of Studies</p>	Meeting minutes	Principal	<p>Quality Manual terms of reference</p> <p>Academic Board meetings with evidence for student involvement</p> <p>Academic Staff Meeting with evidence of student involvement</p> <p>Student evaluation</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide staff development activities that support the delivery of higher education programmes (paragraph 2.11) 	<p>Academic staff will be encouraged to engage more in research and scholarship</p> <p>The College will make reference to the Higher Education Academy and the UK professional standards framework</p>	March 2013	Director of Studies	Course bookings Staff awareness	Principal	Staff development procedure with evidence of higher education activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review its procedures for quality assuring and managing the quality of public information (paragraph 3.5). 	<p>Public information clause will be added in quality assurance procedure</p> <p>Also documenting decisions and outcomes relating to public information will be added to quality assurance procedure</p>	April 2013	IT Manager Director of Studies to carry out the new procedure Responsibility for checking and signing off rests with the Principal	Updated policies and procedures	Principal Quality and Compliance Manager	Quality assurance procedure Publishing policy for electronic and paper-based information
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is desirable for the provider to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consider ways to engage academic staff with the Academic Infrastructure (paragraph 1.6). 	Copies of the Academic Infrastructure will be provided to the academic staff	February 2013	Director of Studies	Details of seminar will be documented	Principal	Staff development procedure Feedback from staff

	<p>The College will conduct a short seminar where all academic staff will be present along with Quality and Compliance Manager; information about QAA and the Academic Infrastructure, now referred to as the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, will be provided</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.

More detail about Review for Educational Oversight can be found at: www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/types-of-review/tier-4.

Glossary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

quality See **academic quality**.

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

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

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

RG 1097 01/13

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

Southgate House
Southgate Street
Gloucester
GL1 1UB

Tel 01452 557000
Fax 01452 557070
Email comms@qaa.ac.uk
Web www.qaa.ac.uk

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ISBN 978 1 84979 779 5

All QAA's publications are available on our website www.qaa.ac.uk

Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786