Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) of All Nations Christian College Ltd

October 2016

Contents

About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at All Nations Christian College Ltd. The review took place from 18 to 20 October 2016 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Mr Millard Parkinson
- Miss Elizabeth Shackels
- Mr Michael Rubin (student reviewer).

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provided by All Nations Christian 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.

In Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) the QAA review team:

- makes judgements on
  - the setting and maintenance of academic standards
  - the quality of student learning opportunities
  - the information provided about higher education provision
  - the enhancement of student learning opportunities
- makes recommendations
- identifies features of good practice
- affirms action that the provider is taking or plans to take.

A check is also made on the provider's financial sustainability, management and governance (FSMG) with the aim of giving students reasonable confidence that they should not be at risk of being unable to complete their course as a result of financial failure.

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 5.

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 please 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 All Nations Christian College Ltd

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at All Nations Christian College Ltd.

- The maintenance of the academic standards of awards **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of the information about 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 All Nations Christian College Ltd:

- the strong community ethos, as exemplified by the weekly 'kick-off' meetings, which promotes a positive environment for student/staff engagement (Expectation B5 and Enhancement)
- the extensive range of well-supported placement partnerships which enables students to develop wider skills and promotes their understanding of the complexities of missionary work (Expectations B10, B4 and Enhancement)
- the wide range of external partnerships which promotes the development of an enriched curriculum and enhances students' understanding of cultural and religious differences between societies (Enhancement and Expectation B3).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations** to All Nations Christian College Ltd.

By April 2017:

- ensure that assessment feedback is timely and that assessment feedback schedules are consistently applied to support student academic development (Expectation B6).

By June 2017:

- revise the College's Teaching and Learning Strategy to better reflect the range and level of provision and clearly identify how the aims of the strategy are to be achieved (Expectation B3)
- articulate the differences between the University's review processes and the internal periodic review of programmes to ensure the full engagement of staff (Expectation B8).

Financial sustainability, management and governance

The financial sustainability, management and governance check has been satisfactorily completed.

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

About All Nations Christian College Ltd

All Nations Christian College Ltd (the College) is an independent mission training institution which is evangelical, interdenominational, and multicultural and has fellowships with Christian groups around the world. The current College is the result of merger in 1971 and its campus is situated in Easneye, Hertfordshire. The College's current higher education provision includes BA (Hons) in Biblical and Intercultural Studies and MA/MTh in Contemporary Mission Studies with five pathways. Both programmes are validated by The Open University. The student body mainly consists of residential mature students, some with accompanying families, from around the world, which creates a culturally diverse learning environment. There are also a number of distance learning students. Students are encouraged to engage with the hands, heads and hearts ethos of the College, which considers the academic alongside missionary practicalities. The College's mission statement is 'to train and equip men and women for effective participation in God's' mission in His multicultural world.' The College has 63 full-time students studying on the undergraduate programme and 35 studying on the postgraduate programme (16 of these study online). Most students are residents at the College's campus.

The last QAA review was a Review for Educational Oversight (REO) in November 2012. Since then the College appointed a new Principal in March 2016 and as the function of this role is mainly ambassadorial – to promote the College and build relationships through networking – the College also established a new role of Vice Principal (Academic). Since the 2012 REO the College has undertaken revalidation of its master's programme and underwent Institutional Review with The Open University in 2014. The College introduced a new virtual learning environment (VLE) for students at all levels and staff in 2013 which it continues to develop.

Key challenges facing the College include maintaining the size of its student community in terms of decreasing international student numbers due to the regulatory requirements and visa restrictions for overseas students; the decline in some areas of the UK church; the overall compliance burdens from various organisations in the higher education sector; and the maintenance of the campus which includes old buildings. Through the College's strategic plan and the recent senior appointments made it is anticipated that the profile of the College will be raised and the number of productive relationships with other organisations will increase. The strategic changes also highlights the importance the College is placing on enhancing its provision and the student learning experience.

The College's awarding body is The Open University and this relationship has existed since 1992. The College underwent the University's Institutional Review process in 2014 and was successfully approved for five years. The MA programme was successfully revalidated in 2013 and the undergraduate programme is due for revalidation in 2017. Any conditions arising from the review and revalidation have been met.

Since the 2012 REO, the College has undergone several annual monitoring visits in 2013, 2014 and 2015, the outcomes of which were all acceptable progress against the original QAA review action plan, and progress made against the College's own internal action planning and programme developing processes. The 2015 monitoring visit report noted the development of the VLE and placement support and materials.

Explanation of the findings about All Nations Christian College Ltd

This section explains the review findings in more detail.

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

1   Judgement: The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies

Expectation (A1): In order to secure threshold academic standards, degree-awarding bodies:

a) ensure that the requirements of _The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland_ (FHEQ) are met by:

- **positioning their qualifications at the appropriate level of the relevant framework for higher education qualifications**
- **ensuring that programme learning outcomes align with the relevant qualification descriptor in the relevant framework for higher education qualifications**
- **naming qualifications in accordance with the titling conventions specified in the frameworks for higher education qualifications**
- **awarding qualifications to mark the achievement of positively defined programme learning outcomes**

b) consider and take account of QAA's guidance on qualification characteristics

c) where they award UK credit, assign credit values and design programmes that align with the specifications of the relevant national credit framework

d) consider and take account of relevant Subject Benchmark Statements.

Quality Code, _Chapter A1: UK and European Reference Points for Academic Standards_

Findings

1.1   The College does not have degree awarding powers and its degrees are awarded by The Open University (the University). Programmes are designed by the College and subject to the University's validation and revalidation procedures; the undergraduate programme was revalidated in 2012 and the postgraduate programme in 2013 both for five years.

1.2   There are College procedures for the designing of programmes and alignment with the appropriate levels of the FHEQ in accordance with The Open University's Handbook for Validated Awards. This ensures that the programme specifications and learning outcomes are set at the appropriate level and informed by the relevant Subject Benchmark Statement. The University has responsibility for monitoring alignment with external threshold standards, naming conventions and that awards are made on achievement of learning outcomes through its Institutional Review and validation procedures. External standards and reference points are considered as part of the internal approval process including Subject Benchmark Statements. External examiners are expected to comment on the appropriate achievement of learning outcomes.

1.3   The College's internal processes and the overall responsibilities of the University would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.4   In testing the Expectation, the review team examined documentation including review and validation reports, policy documents and minutes of relevant meetings. The review team also met the College Principal, senior and academic staff and University staff.

1.5   There is clear evidence of consideration of revisions to programmes by the Undergraduate, Postgraduate and Quality Assurance Committees and approval by the Academic Board prior to the external validation review by the University, which includes evaluation of the current programme and feedback from academic staff, students and external examiners. Questionnaires are sent to all existing undergraduate students and the previous five years' graduates as part of the preparation for revalidation to identify their suggested revisions. This is analysed and included in programme design. Staff also examine the FHEQ and appropriate Subject Benchmark Statements in planning revisions to programmes. The long-term partnership with the University and successful revalidations indicate that the process works in practice.

1.6   The responsibilities of the College and the awarding body regarding the security of UK threshold standards ensuring the College provision is aligned with those standards and appropriate levels allows the review team to conclude that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A2.1): In order to secure their academic standards, degree-awarding bodies establish transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern how they award academic credit and qualifications.

Quality Code, *Chapter A2: Degree-Awarding Bodies' Reference Points for Academic Standards*

Findings

1.7   The College has followed the academic regulations of the University since 2015 prior to which their own regulations were in place. Guidance on application of these regulations is contained in the University's Handbook for Validated Awards and is monitored by the University Quality and Partnership Manager and Academic Reviewer, one of whom attends the College's examination boards.

1.8   The College has reviewed and revised its academic policies in line with new University regulations. These include its Teaching and Learning Policy, Moderation Policy, Academic Misconduct Policy and Academic Appeals Policy all of which are to be reviewed annually. Policies are made available to staff and students on the College's virtual learning environment (VLE). The revision of policies is considered and approved at Academic Board and submitted to the University for feedback.

1.9   The College committee structure comprises the College Council, which acts as an overall governing body and includes a number of separate committees including a Governance Committee and Finance and Resources Committee. Most Council members are external to the College but the Head Student Representative is now an automatic member of the Council and attends all meetings unless confidential matters are to be discussed. The College also has a Senior Leadership Team which meets monthly and comprises the Principal, Vice- Principal (Academic), Finance Manager, Facilities Manager and En-Route Programme Leader Manager. The Quality Assurance Committee is responsible for all academic matters and includes a number of external members, one of whom acts as Chair, academic and professional staff and students. This Committee reports to the Academic Board which has the same membership as the Quality Assurance Committee and is chaired by the Vice Principal (Academic).

1.10   The University's academic regulations, College processes and the College's committee structure to monitor compliance with these in achievement of credit and qualifications would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.11   The review team examined documentation including University handbooks, the College committee structure, policies and minutes of meetings and met the Principal, senior and academic staff.

1.12   The review team found that through the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Committees, Quality Assurance Committee and in records of Examination Boards the College monitors the processes for awarding credit and qualifications in line with University regulations and is informed by external reference points including the Quality Code.

1.13   There is an intention to appoint another academic member of the Senior Leadership Team in addition to the Vice Principal (Academic) to facilitate the planned increase in student numbers and expansion of provision.

1.14   The positive reports by the University Academic Reviewer and external examiners, all of which are considered by the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Committees and Quality Assurance Committee and overseen by the Academic Board are consistently positive and indicate that the processes to ensure the maintenance of academic standards and quality works effectively in practice.

1.15   The College adheres to the regulations of its awarding body through its deliberative committee structures and the College's staff awareness of their responsibilities, thus ensuring that the awarding body's regulatory framework is appropriately applied. Therefore, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A2.2): Degree-awarding bodies maintain a definitive record of each programme and qualification that they approve (and of subsequent changes to it) which constitutes the reference point for delivery and assessment of the programme, its monitoring and review, and for the provision of records of study to students and alumni.

Quality Code, *Chapter A2: Degree-Awarding Bodies' Reference Points for Academic Standards*

Findings

1.16   The responsibility for maintenance of programme records is set out in the service level agreement between the College and the University. The College is responsible for keeping copies of programme documents and handbooks. The College therefore keeps a record of key documents including background documents, programme handbooks, programme and module specifications. The University requires these documents to be produced every five years. Programme specifications and programme handbook are made available online and through the VLE. Programme handbooks are approved by both the Academic Board and the University. Module specifications are updated annually and made available through the VLE; they are based on a University template. The College maintains a record of all module scores.

1.17   The College follows the requirements of the University for keeping definitive programme documentation, and has established internal processes which would enable the Expectation to be met.

1.18   The review team considered the background document, programme handbooks and module specifications, as well as additional documentation. Information provided online through the College website and the VLE was accessed and meetings were held with students, and College and University staff.

1.19   The administrative team is responsible for maintaining the definitive record of programme documentation, as well as ensuring the VLE and student handbook is kept up to date. Student handbooks are revised annually by the programme leaders and the training administrators and approved by the Vice Principal; and were found to be of a good standard. Programme specifications are set at validation stage by the relevant academic team. Module specifications contain the required information to meet the requirements of Expectation A2.2 and University regulations. The module scores record has a useful colour-coding system to view student performance at a glance.

1.20   The College adheres to the University's regulations for maintaining and updating definitive programme documentation and College staff are aware of their responsibilities in the process. Therefore, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.1): Degree-awarding bodies establish and consistently implement processes for the approval of taught programmes and research degrees that ensure that academic standards are set at a level which meets the UK threshold standard for the qualification and are in accordance with their own academic frameworks and regulations.

Quality Code, *Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards*

Findings

1.21   Responsibility for the design and approval of higher education programmes delivered by the College rests with the University as its awarding body. The University ensures that academic standards are set in accordance with their academic frameworks and regulations and at a level that meets UK threshold standards. The University handbook describes the mechanism for programme approval, which the College is required to adhere to in accordance with the agreements.

1.22   The College has an internal programme approval process that is outlined in their Policy and Procedures handbook and involves the development of a background document. This process collates information from a range of sources and stakeholders, such as past and present students, external examiners, placement providers and a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis of current provision. New or revalidated course proposals are submitted by programme leaders to the Quality Assurance Committee and from there to the Academic Board for final ratification.

1.23   The College has devised a Teaching and Learning Strategy that is intended to inform the assessment process for each module. Assessment processes are outlined in the student handbook for both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and also includes relevant information on formative and summative assessment and information on the internal and external moderation of work.

1.24   The College undertakes an annual monitoring process for all its awards. This consists of a written report that takes cognisance of student views from student module evaluations and relevant evidence from external examiner reports. The College training team has also been involved in a University Institutional Review in 2014 and revalidation of taught programmes. The periodic review of taught programmes takes place at five-yearly intervals and where appropriate will include reapproval of the programmes.

1.25   External examiners who have relevant subject knowledge are appointed to engage with the College to ensure that the academic standards of the provision is maintained.

1.26   The College's adherence to the University's regulations for the design of modules and assessment and the College's own internal processes for ensuring oversight of the maintenance of academic standards would enable the Expectation to be met.

1.27   The review team studied documents that describe the University's and College's procedures, considered responsibility checklists, requested additional information and explored the approval and review processes with staff and students at the College.

1.28   The responsibilities of the College and the awarding body are detailed in the responsibilities checklist for the University. It is clear that approval of programmes rests with the latter.

1.29   The description of the College's internal programme validation process within the Policy and Procedures handbook clearly articulates the process, and all members of the Senior Leadership Team, training team and professional staff demonstrated a sound understanding of the process. External examiners confirm monitoring is undertaken annually for higher education provision at departmental level and this is explored further in Expectation B8.

1.30   College programme leaders have established a close working relationship with their external examiners and consequently external examiners participate in Examination Boards and Progression Boards, as well as feeding back on academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities. External examiners are required to confirm that the award is aligned with the FHEQ and any applicable Subject Benchmark Statements and their reports confirm this.

1.31   The University, in conjunction with the College's policies and procedures, ensures that academic standards accord with UK threshold standards. Therefore the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.2): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that credit and qualifications are awarded only where:

- **the achievement of relevant learning outcomes (module learning outcomes in the case of credit and programme outcomes in the case of qualifications) has been demonstrated through assessment**
- **both UK threshold standards and their own academic standards have been satisfied.**

Quality Code, *Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards*

Findings

1.32   The University Responsibility Checklist specifies the responsibilities for all awards delivered by the College, including the responsibilities relating to assessment. The University also updates its application of regulations on an annual basis.

1.33   The module specifications designed at validation approval outline the learning outcomes that the assessment must achieve. The College designs all the assessments and submits them to the external examiners for approval. There is also a process for minor and major amendment of module assessment. The Undergraduate and Postgraduate Handbooks make reference to assessment. At master's level, the Student Handbook makes reference to self-study lessons for students studying online.

1.34   The College undertakes first marking and moderation and submits the work to the external examiners for further confirmation. The College works with the external examiners to agree and arrange the necessary sampling of assessment to be undertaken. Both external examiners and University Quality and Partnership Manager attend the internal College Examination and Progression Boards.

1.35   The College's adherence to the University's requirements as well as its own assessment policies and procedures would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.36   The review team read the College's student handbooks, and reviewed policies and procedures, minutes of examination boards and external examiners' reports in order to test the Expectation. The review team also verified the assessment process through discussions with College staff.

1.37   External examiners' reports confirm that the College's provision has academic standards comparable to those of other higher education providers and the reports also indicate that programme assessment is thorough and rigorous.

1.38   The College convenes annual internal examination and progression boards. Following this all awards are then presented for information to the Quality Assurance Committee for accuracy and from there to the Academic Board which ratifies all award decisions. Each Board is chaired, serviced and managed by the College with the exception of the Quality Assurance Committee; this committee is chaired by an external representative. The Quality Assurance Committee, Academic Board and College Council, through the Vice Principal, monitor all higher education external examiner reports. The structure of committee oversight and monitoring processes was found to be effective in maintaining the assessment of learning outcomes. Staff confirmed their responsibilities in the process including moderation and clearly articulated minor and major change procedures. It was confirmed that new members of staff are inducted into the process of moderation by the Vice Principal (Academic).

1.39   The College, in adhering to the University's guidelines has a range of processes in place to ensure effective assessment of learning outcomes, the monitoring of standards and the associated award of credit and qualifications. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.3): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that processes for the monitoring and review of programmes are implemented which explicitly address whether the UK threshold academic standards are achieved and whether the academic standards required by the individual degree-awarding body are being maintained.

Quality Code, *Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards*

1.40   The University has academic oversight of all higher education programmes at the College. The College undertakes annual monitoring of programmes in accordance with the University's regulations. Managerial oversight of this rests with the Vice Principal (Academic) who reports directly to the Quality Assurance Committee and Academic Board both of which, as outlined in their terms of reference, have a responsibility to monitor all programmes being delivered by the College.

1.41   A five-yearly Institutional Review of Taught Programmes at the College is undertaken by the University. This process assures the quality and standards of taught programme provision against internal and external points of reference, ensures that they align with UK threshold standards, provides a robust mechanism for reapproving programmes, takes a holistic view of taught provision in a subject area and supports the strategic planning of programme development.

1.42   Programme annual monitoring forms are compliant with both University regulations and with the Quality Code. The annual monitoring report is reviewed throughout the year at key interval periods, considered by the Quality Assurance Committee and Academic Board, and all actions are closed off before the next annual report is produced. The College's Vice Principal (Academic) extracts all actions from each report and presents them to the academic board which then monitors their progression.

1.43   The College's adherence to the University regulations for the monitoring and review of provision as well as the College's own monitoring processes would enable the Expectation to be met.

1.44   The review team tested the Expectation by considering the University's Quality Handbook, the College's policies, procedures and annual monitoring reports. The review team also explored the College staff understanding of the processes through discussion.

1.45   The University's Quality and Partnership Manager works collaboratively with the College and attends both Examination and Progression Board meetings. The manager is also involved in the validation and revalidation process and is available to assist the undergraduate and postgraduate programme team leaders during the production of the annual monitoring reports.

1.46   The College has established an effective process for annual monitoring of all taught programmes. Staff were able to clearly articulate this during the review visit.

1.47   The University retains oversight of all awards, and setting learning outcomes and assessment criteria ensures that UK threshold academic standards are achieved and that the academic standards are maintained. The College's internal review processes enable them to discharge responsibility in this area effectively which staff were able to articulate. Therefore, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.4): In order to be transparent and publicly accountable, degree-awarding bodies use external and independent expertise at key stages of setting and maintaining academic standards to advise on whether:

- **UK threshold academic standards are set, delivered and achieved**
- **the academic standards of the degree-awarding body are appropriately set and maintained.**

Quality Code, *Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards*

Findings

1.48   The University has responsibility for ensuring threshold academic standards are set and achieved and are at the appropriate academic levels. The College is responsible for aligning its programmes to appropriate academic standards during the design of programmes through its internal prevalidation process. These programmes are monitored and approved by the University at validation and revalidation.

1.49   There are various mechanisms the College implements to engage with external input into the design or revalidation of higher education provision. Validation panels organised and following University procedures include external members from other unrelated institutions who are familiar with appropriate UK academic standards and Subject Benchmark Statements. External input into the design and development of programmes prior to validation comes from members of ministry organisations, placement providers and former students. Current students are also asked to comment on the revision of programmes prior to revalidation. There are senior academics with experience of other institutions on the Academic Board and Quality Assurance Committee. External examiners monitor achievement of appropriate academic standards and are invited to comment on planned revisions in preparation for revalidation.

1.50   The College contributed to consultation on revision of the Subject Benchmark Statement: Theology and Religious Studies. Academic staff are encouraged and supported to engage in research and scholarly activity which brings them into contact with national and international organisations and experts, which expands their knowledge and experience and informs development of provision.

1.51   The College's adherence to the University's requirement regarding the use of externality in the design and approval of programmes and the implementation of the University validation process would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.52   The review team examined evidence provided including University regulations and validation reports, staff development records and held meetings with senior and academic staff.

1.53   The review team found that the College uses external expertise at key points throughout the management of its higher education provision. As well as having consistent academic external input at its key oversight committees thereby ensuring academic standards are regularly monitored, the revalidation of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, which includes external deliberation and consultation, confirms that the College actively seeks and uses external input to effectively maintain the academic standards of its higher education provision.

1.54   The College uses external and independent expertise in the process of programme design and approval which ensures that the provision is aligned to UK threshold standards

and meets the requirements of its awarding body. Therefore, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies: Summary of findings

1.55   In reaching its judgement about the maintenance of the academic standards of awards, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

1.56   All of the applicable Expectations in this area have been met and the risk is judged low in each case. There were no features of good practice or recommendations in this area.

1.57   The review team concludes that the maintenance of the academic standards of awards at the College **meets** UK expectations.

2 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

2.1   The College delivers programmes that are approved by its degree-awarding body partner, The Open University. The College manages the standards of its academic provision through implementing the procedures of the University by ensuring its policies and procedures are aligned both to the University's regulations that are updated annually, and to the Quality Code.

2.2   The College operates an internal programme approval process that it requires all its programmes, new or existing awards, to follow. The process involves the completion of a background document that gathers intelligence from a range of sources including undertaking a SWOT analysis, evidence from alumni, present and past students and external examiners. The background document is then considered by the Academic Board before being presented to the University. Throughout this process the Quality and Partnership Managers from the University work constructively with the College programme leaders.

2.3   The University provides the College with a Higher Education Handbook. The University also updates its regulations annually. The latter document sets out the mechanism for programme approval for all awards. The College designs teaching materials based on the programme specifications and module descriptors approved at validation by the University. Part of the partnership agreement between the College and the University is that approval to run programmes lasts for five years and also that an Institutional Review will be undertaken by the University of the College's provision every five years to ensure University standards are being met.

2.4   The College's adherence to the University's regulations and following the programme approval procedures outlined in the University Handbook, as well as the College's own internal mechanisms for programme approval, would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.5   The Expectation was tested through consulting the University's Handbook, its regulations and associated College evidence plus additional evidence requested by the review team. Discussions were held with University's Quality and Partnership Manager, College academic and professional staff.

2.6   Programmes offered by the College are designed to meet student interests to address the skills gaps around the wider social issues of vulnerable people as well as an understanding of the global cultural and religious differences of societies in which students may eventually work. There is also extensive consultation with local placement providers to design suitable programmes that provide opportunities for self-reflection. The College is currently working on widening its curriculum, and consultation with placement providers and wider stakeholders has commenced as well as collating information from external examiners' reports, present and past student evaluations.

2.7   The College has an internal programme approval process for new and existing programmes that is outlined in their Policy and Procedures and involves the development of the background document. This process collates information from a range of sources and stakeholders. New or revalidated course proposals, such as the one the College is preparing for in April 2017, are submitted by programme leaders to Academic Board, where there is student representation for final ratification. The training administrators facilitate this process. College staff were able to outline how minor and major changes to programme assessment were undertaken and this was confirmed by the University's Quality and Partnership Managers. Discussions with College staff indicate that the process works effectively.

2.8   The University ensures that the design, development and approval process is rigorous and the College has established a sound process for the validation and revalidation programmes which its staff are aware of and follow. Student participation in the process is ensured through student evaluations and committee attendance. Therefore the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of 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

2.9   Student recruitment is the sole responsibility of the College as set out in the service level agreement with the University. The College details its recruitment, selection and admission policies and procedures in its Admissions Policy, which is based on an adapted policy document from, and acknowledged by, Aston University. The Admissions Policy is approved by the Academic Board and reviewed annually. The policy is made available to staff and students via the College's VLE and is available to prospective students via the College website. Applications can be made through an online application form and the deadlines for application are set out clearly in the Admissions Policy. Applications are also received via hardcopy and through email. Every applicant who meets the entry requirements for the undergraduate programme is required to attend an interview either in person or electronically via an interactive video link. Applicants to the postgraduate programme are required to complete a document critique, with students having a choice of three different documents, two of which are available online.

2.10   The procedure for handling appeals and complaints about recruitment, selection and admission is contained within the Application Complaints and Appeals Policy. This procedure is detailed and thorough and sets out clearly the acceptable and unacceptable grounds for admission complaints as well as the procedure for making both formal and informal complaints; likewise for admission appeals, including the process for appealing to the University.

2.11   The College has established internal policies and procedures for admissions which would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.12   The review team considered various documentation including the College's Admissions Policy and the agreements with the University as well as other supporting documentation. Information provided online through the college website and VLE was accessed and meetings were held with both students and staff.

2.13   Recruitment and Training Administrators are responsible for admissions onto the undergraduate, postgraduate and short courses. Each programme leader is subsequently responsible for ensuring admission policies and procedures are followed. Staff showed a good and developed understanding of the admissions process. Recruitment and training administrators attend conferences and external training to assist with their roles in the admissions process. Students are able to appeal admissions decisions to both the University and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) if required, although there have been no recent examples of appeals to either.

2.14   The College hosts six 'Enquirers' Days' through the academic year, to allow potential applicants to spend a day on campus and gain a developed understanding of student life at the College. The Enquirers' Days feature interactive sessions, mini-lectures, opportunities to meet current students and staff and tours of the campus. All academic staff are involved in the Enquirers' Days and use them as an opportunity to share the ethos of the College. Students confirmed that the Enquirers' Days offer students a good indication of

what to expect from student life at the College. The College also offers informal tours for students who cannot attend the Enquirers' Days.

2.15   The Admissions Policy is reviewed annually and there is evidence of this taking place at the Academic Board meeting in October 2015. While the College does undertake an analysis of student country of origin, targeting 50 per cent of the intake from UK and 50 per cent from the rest of the world, there is a limited organisational understanding of analysing, at a strategic level, the effectiveness of admissions procedures.

2.16   Students are satisfied with the admissions process and the encouragement staff provide to ensure a personalised admissions journey. Students are encouraged to be a minimum age of 21 to ensure they have relevant missionary or other life experience, although the College has admitted students under this age. Those students on the undergraduate programme who had interviews via an interactive video link reported the process to be seamless and positive. Teaching staff take turns to interview students and use an 'interview chat/report form' to mark the prospective student. The marking criteria features relatively subject, open-ended questions due to the varied nature of the College's student body making a more fixed marking criteria ineffective. The interview form ensures appropriate selection of candidates for the undergraduate programme.

2.17   While student applications are now made using an online form, providing a better process and enabling quicker responses to student queries, the review team found an example of a student who applied late and received a slow response from the College.

2.18   If there are changes to provision between application and induction, module tutors notify students and use the VLE as a news bulletin system. It is, however, rare for the College to make major changes to a programme during that period. Students indicated that the College is transparent regarding the expectations of the programmes, and they had not experienced any substantive differences between application and induction.

2.19   The College's 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 the College in the selection of students who are able to complete their programme. Therefore, the team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated 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

2.20   The College has a Teaching and Learning Strategy generic to both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, different modes of attendance and distance learning and contains teaching and learning aims of the College. Separate assessment strategies for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes are contained in the programme handbooks and informed by University assessment regulations.

2.21   Staff are subject to an annual appraisal by the College Principal and also undertake peer appraisal in a teaching situation which provides opportunities to share good practice at Training Team meetings. Academic staff also act as personal tutors to students on the programmes they deliver. New members of staff undertake a staff induction programme and are partnered with an experienced staff mentor. CVs provided indicate that less than half of teaching staff hold teaching qualifications and only one has Higher Education Academy (HEA) recognition.

2.22   Students complete end-of-module and programme evaluations that include comments on teaching and learning. These are considered at Undergraduate and Postgraduate Committee meetings and by the Quality Assurance Committee with some indication of analysis or how they are used. They are included in the annual monitoring report sent to the University. Summaries of the individual module evaluations are presented at Academic Board.

2.23   Staff are expected to undertake staff development and the College has a Staff Development Policy. There is a list of research activities undertaken by staff who are also encouraged to undertake postgraduate study and apply for HEA recognition.

2.24   The College's processes and procedures for teaching and learning would allow the Expectation to be met, but further evidence is required on differentiation of teaching strategies to suit the diverse range of students and modes of study.

2.25   The review team examined evidence provided including policies, the Teaching and Learning Strategy, observation forms and external examiners' reports, student feedback and minutes of meetings and met senior and academic staff and students.

2.26   The College has a Teaching and Learning Strategy which contains no specific strategies to suit differences in undergraduate and postgraduate learning, modes of attendance and distance learning. The strategy identifies the College aims for teaching and learning but does not provide strategies for how these are to be achieved. Specific strategies to meet the particular needs of undergraduate, postgraduate and distance learning students would help to ensure that teaching is appropriate and that effective learning takes place. Separate assessment strategies and policies for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes are contained in programme handbooks and are informed by University assessment regulations and the Quality Code*, Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning*. The review team **recommends** the revision of the College's

Teaching and Learning Strategy to better reflect the range and level of provision and clearly identify how the aims of the strategy are to be achieved.

2.27   There is a definition of research and scholarly activity in the Staff Development Policy with details of how development is disseminated, evaluated and applied in teaching. Funding is available for staff development with applications made to the Staff Development Group Committee for consideration and approval. Staff undertaking supported research are required to complete a report indicating the benefit to themselves and to the College. After seven years working at the College, staff are entitled to undertake sabbatical leave from which they bring back good practice and experience to the College. This use of external practice and experience informing teaching and learning together with the development of external partnerships is further explored later in the report under the Expectation Enhancement and is identified as a feature of good practice.

2.28   Evidence contained in student module evaluations, external examiner reports and student achievement data which is considered at Undergraduate and Postgraduate Committee and Training Staff meetings indicates that the processes for ensuring effective teaching and providing students with a quality learning experience work effectively in practice. The requirements and support for staff development enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

2.29   The College has processes in place to observe and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and to provide appropriate staff development. The College has a Teaching and Learning Strategy that requires further development and which has led to a recommendation. Students confirmed satisfaction with the teaching methods provided. Therefore, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associate level of 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

2.30   The College provides support for students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential through a variety of ways including a pastoral support system on a tutorial and individual basis, support for students with disabilities and learning difficulties and those students who require additional support to help them to learn at a higher level. Opportunities are also available for students to develop their missionary and cultural awareness skills. These opportunities are supported by various resources through handbooks, access to learning resources and the College VLE.

2.31   The College has a system of pastoral tutorials with allocated personal tutors meeting with students for regular formal tutorials and for additional tutorials on demand. In addition to this process students are supported by a Personal Development Tutor who provides pastoral support and can refer students to outside specialist support if required. Tutors complete an end of year report on each student which is passed to their next year's tutor.

2.32   The College has a Learning Support Policy and Equal Opportunities Policy which identifies support offered to students with disabilities and individual learning needs. Details of tutorial and other support are included in student handbooks.

2.33   All students studying Personal Development and Ministry Skills at Level 5 and Reflective Mission Practice at Level 6, which provide relevant experience through project and placement opportunities, are trained to use personal development plans (PDPs) to help them develop skills and strategies for improvement.

2.34   The College has a comprehensive system of academic support including Compulsory Foundation Studies for students entering directly to Level 5 and dedicated sessions for all academic levels. There is also a Study Skills course for international undergraduate and postgraduate students.

2.35   The College provides all learning resources used by students who provide positive feedback on teaching accommodation, library and IT resources. These are examined by the University at validation. The College has a Learning Resources Strategy which outlines the definition of learning resources and the College aims to ensure they are provided. Currently students and staff do not have access to University learning resources. There has been a considerable recent investment in internet access.

2.36   Placements for all undergraduate students provide an opportunity for students to apply teaching in a practical context, to widen their experience and develop their reflective skills. The College had developed its VLE and also has a separate one for distance learning students. The College has expanded its pastoral support processes for distance learning students to help provide parity of support with residential students.

2.37   The College's policies and processes including the tutorial and support systems would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.38 The review team tested the Expectation by examining evidence provided including the College Learning Support, Extenuating Circumstances and Equal Opportunities policies and student feedback in evaluations. The review team met senior, academic and support staff and students.

2.39 The student submission indicates high levels of satisfaction with pastoral support offered and includes feedback on support in programme evaluations. There are plans to improve access to the College site for students with physical disabilities and difficulties. Currently, support for students with disabilities is considered on an individual basis as required and students stated that teaching had been relocated to accommodate a student with mobility difficulties.

2.40 The student submission states that the College recruits a large number of international students whose first language may not be English and that informal support in English including informal checking of assignments is provided by fellow students. Students confirmed the appropriateness and effectiveness of this process.

2.41 Student feedback indicates that the process for providing resources and support for students works in practice, with pastoral support enhanced by the College's open-door policy, good access to and communication with tutors including shared meals and prayers. Residential students and their families who live on campus are provided with appropriate accommodation, transport, local childcare and school provision.

2.42 The Learning Resources Strategy is reviewed annually by the Information and Learning Services Manager and approved by Academic Board with resources considered and allocated as required by academic staff. There has been considerable investment in internet and broadband resources in response to staff and student feedback.

2.43 Placements prepare students well for the types of missionary and community work they will be involved in after leaving College and this area of the provision has been identified as a feature of good practice under Expectation B10. The College provides support for placements including handbooks, transport to placements and payment for Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

2.44 The College has a range of supportive mechanisms and resources to support students' learning, development and achievement. The open-door ethos and inclusive environment of the College enables students to fulfil their potential. The review team concludes that the levels of pastoral and academic support for students and learning resources ensure the Expectation is met and the associated level of 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

2.45   The College has a 'head, heart, hands' ethos which means students are actively encouraged to participate as partners in their educational experience. Student representation takes the form of two Head Students, one male and one female who serve for 10 weeks, and a wider Student Committee. The rest of the Student Committee consists of representatives who represent different aspects of living and study at the campus. There are student representatives representing each level of each programme and a student representative sitting on the College Council. Student representatives from each level of study are on the membership of the Undergraduate Committee, Postgraduate Committee, Quality Assurance Committee and Academic Board. Students complete module evaluations for each module and an annual programme evaluation at the end of each academic year. Student representatives see all of the results of these evaluations and are made aware of how the College will address any issues.

2.46   The College has established internal policies and mechanisms to enable student engagement on an individual and collective level which would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.47   The review team considered various documentation including minutes from College committees, the Student Body Constitution and other relevant documentation. Information provided online through the College website and the VLE was accessed. Meetings were held with both staff and students, including student representatives, Student Committee members, the Lead Student Representative, Student Council Representative and those who do not have a formal student representative position.

2.48   There is a Student Body Constitution which governs the activities of the student body at the College. The Constitution is clear and thorough. Student representatives are elected by their peers at a termly Student Body Meeting, which is well attended and the Student Committee is held in high regard by the student body.

2.49   A job description for the position of Head Student is available and sets out clearly the responsibilities of the role. The Head Students meet weekly with the Facilities Manager and Principal and feel able to discuss any relevant issues. The student representative on the College Council attends all three Council meetings, with a new system, designed specifically around the representative, to ensure the meeting dates are published a year in advance and all of the Council meetings take place during term time. This representative is able to meet with the Council Chairman to discuss the agenda and papers prior to each Council meeting, which provides a good opportunity for student engagement.

2.50   The student body has a good understanding of the student representative system, describing it as a bridge between students and staff. Student representatives receive formal training which is helpful in explaining the College structure and where the representatives fit in, as well as setting out the expectations of the role. In addition, student representatives receive an information pack about the role.

2.51   The College has an open-door policy to ensure all representatives can speak to the relevant staff for support and are given a prior reminder about what the different meetings involve, providing a good level of support to representatives. Programme leaders meet with

the relevant representatives early in their tenure, during week one or two, to make sure they are having a positive experience. The Undergraduate Committee in week three and the Postgraduate Committee in week seven provides a more formal opportunity for student feedback.

2.52   Student representatives confirmed their satisfaction that issues are thoroughly discussed in the relevant meetings and student concerns listened to, and there are good, well documented examples of student contribution to College committee meetings. The College aims to resolve issues between the programme committee and module or programme evaluation. There is, however, an issue around student representation for distance-learning students. There is currently no student representative system for distance-learners, which is a gap in the College's student engagement processes.

2.53   Students complete an evaluation for each module and an annual programme evaluation at the end of each academic year. Module feedback is collated through the VLE and is considered at Academic Board, Undergraduate Committee and Postgraduate Committee. Student representatives see all of the results and are made aware of how the College will address any issues. Action plans in response to student feedback are included in the annual monitoring report for each student. Student representatives are responsible for feeding information from the relevant committees back to students and thus closing the feedback loop. Student feedback is also gathered through the VLE. There are good examples of the College responding to student feedback; for instance, family members being able to attend graduation and the process that led to it working effectively – issue raised, voted on at Student Body meeting, taken to weekly Principal and Facilities Manager meeting and acted upon. Other examples include new broadband facility in response to student concerns and a curriculum restructuring to integrate more PDP. The examples, and more importantly the processes that underpin them, show that the College's processes for student engagement are working effectively.

2.54   In addition to student involvement through the representative system and module evaluation, there are examples of wider student engagement in College processes. Students are involved in strategic development via a student member of the Strategy Review Team and student feedback via a SWOT analysis. There is student involvement in the recruitment of senior staff, for instance the recently appointed Principal and Chief Executive Officer. There is also student involvement in recruitment of teaching staff via receiving a sample lecture and providing feedback. In addition, students are engaged in curriculum design during the revalidation process. All of the above examples demonstrate a College that is committed to student engagement throughout its processes.

2.55   The College's strategy towards student engagement is embodied best in a weekly 'kick-off' meeting. This meeting is led by students, with the Student Committee acting as host. It takes place every Monday morning with both students and staff encouraged to attend, in order to share information and contribute to the community ethos of the College. The student submission states that the student body has a 'good relationship with staff at the college' and this is in no small part down to the collegiate atmosphere created by the 'kick-off' meeting, which is described by students as extremely helpful and something they wish had been available at other institutions they had been part of. The review team therefore concludes that the community ethos as exemplified by the weekly 'kick-off' meetings, which promote a positive environment for student/staff engagement, is **good practice**.

2.56   The College takes deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience through a variety of mechanisms including a comprehensive student representation and

feedback system. Good practice is identified in this area. Therefore the review team concludes that the Expectation 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

2.57   The Open University with whom the College works has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that assessment maps to learning outcomes, and this is described in section A3.2. However, the College is responsible for operating assessment.

2.58   The College undergraduate and postgraduate programme handbooks clearly outline the assessment process for each module that has been agreed with the University at validation. The College designs all the assessments and submits them to the external examiners for approval and edits where necessary. Should minor or major changes be required to assessment this can be undertaken in conjunction with the University by the Quality and Partnership Manager. The College undertakes first and second marking or moderation and submits the work to the external examiners for further moderation. The College works with the external examiners to agree and arrange the necessary sampling moderation to be undertaken. External examiners and the University Quality and Partnership Managers attend Examination and Progression Boards.

2.59   The Undergraduate and Postgraduate Handbooks make reference to assessment. At master's level the student handbook makes reference to the process of self-study. All such processes are outlined in the College internal moderation policy; staff are conversant with this process. New staff are inducted into the process by the Vice Principal (Academic).

2.60   The College's own internal processes for designing, changing and conducting assessment would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.61   The review team tested the Expectation through considering College policies and documents, such as external examiner reports, together with discussion with College staff and students.

2.62   External examiners confirm that assessment is thorough and rigorous. Students in their submission raised some concern over the mark awards for modules in Year 1; however, this was not raised as an issue by students at the review visit.

2.63   Submission methods for assessed work are documented in the Student Handbook that also includes information around plagiarism. International students submit their assignments via email.

2.64   The College ensures that students receive appropriate information about their assessments in both the Student Handbooks and on the VLE. The College policy indicates that marked work must be returned within five working weeks or less and students confirm that feedback is given within the prescribed time. The five working week marking period was questioned by the review team and discussed with staff and students. It was highlighted that some students found it inconsistently applied particularly when semesters were coming to an end. Therefore, the review team **recommends** that the College ensures that assessment feedback is timely and that assessment feedback schedules are consistently applied to support student academic development.

2.65   Students are informed about academic malpractice in the Student Handbooks. All students both on campus and off campus are provided with ongoing support with their assessment whether it is through peer support, tutorial support or online support through the VLE.

2.66   Students who have special needs are assessed for learning support requirements, and it is the responsibility of the programme leader and Information Learning Team to provide this support; in one instance this included intensive one-to-one support for a student where English is not their first language.

2.67   Examination Boards are held annually and Progression Boards when required with the Academic Board having oversight and final sign off on all awards.

2.68   The College has an Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) system which is aligned with the University's APEL system.

2.69   The College operates a sound process of assessment through its assessment strategy, practices and use of the external examiner system. However, the feedback timeframe needs to be reviewed in light of student input into the QAA review process. Therefore, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated risk is moderate because the procedures relating to assessment are broadly met but have some shortcomings in the terms of the rigour with which they are applied.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B7: External Examining*

Findings

2.70   External examiners are proposed by the College and appointed by the University according to their regulations. The external examiners receive guidance from the University and briefings from the College and submit a written report within a month of attending Examination Boards. Information on the role and responsibilities of examiners is included in The Open University's Handbook for Validated Programmes.

2.71   Students are informed of the external examiner with details of their role in Programme Handbooks and previous reports are available on the VLE.

2.72   Assessment tasks are submitted to external examiners for approval prior to being given to students. Samples of assessed work are submitted for external examination following internal moderation according to University regulations, comments on this work is included in reports and at Examination Boards. The College has recently introduced a musical and drama production element to assessment and examiners attend these live productions to examine the assessment by College staff. External examiners attend Examination Boards in line with University regulations to approve progression and awards and provide verbal feedback on students' work.

2.73   External examiners' reports are considered at the Training Team meetings and at Undergraduate and Postgraduate Committees. Actions to be taken are submitted to the Quality Assurance Committee and endorsed by Academic Board. Following these meetings, formal responses to the reports are sent to each external examiner and to the University.

2.74   The College's engagement with external examiners and the use of their reports in the quality assurance of programmes would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.75   In testing the Expectation, the review team examined the external examining processes and external examiner reports and met senior and academic staff and students.

2.76   External examiners' reports provided are consistently positive and include very favourable comments. There is student representation on all committees which consider reports and responses to them including the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Committees and Quality Assurance Committee.

2.77   The external examining process at the College is working effectively through the consideration of and response to external examiner reports and involvement of examiners in future programme developments, in the minutes of the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Committees and Quality Assurance Committee, which are then considered by the Academic Board and included in annual monitoring reports to the University. Some members of staff are external examiners for other awarding bodies and bring this experience to the College. There is evidence of opportunities for student involvement in the external examination process and responses to reports through their membership of the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Committees and Quality Assurance Committee which indicate that the process works effectively in practice.

2.78   The College engages with external examiners and through its quality assurance systems makes scrupulous use of external examiner reports to further develop and enhance

its provision. Therefore, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of 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

2.79   The University outlines the requirements for monitoring and review in the Higher Education Handbook and Associated Regulations document that the College follows for all its undergraduate, postgraduate and master's programmes. In accordance with the University agreements, the College is required to undertake an institutional reapproval and a revalidation of taught programmes every five years.

2.80   The College undertakes an annual monitoring process for all its awards. This consists of a written report that has been devised by the programme leaders in conjunction with Training Administrators. Completed reports are forwarded to the Quality Assurance Committee and to the Academic Board for ratification. This process is completed by November of each year. The reports take account of module marks, student views from student module evaluations and relevant evidence from external examiner reports. Furthermore, programmes that require revalidation participate in a prevalidation process that involves both staff from the College and University.

2.81   The College's monitoring and review process, which meets the University's requirements, would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.82   The review team tested the Expectation by considering documentation such as annual monitoring and external examiners' reports as well as committee meeting minutes. The review team also met College staff and students.

2.83   The College undertakes an annual monitoring process for all its awards that follows a standard template for all programmes. This process is published in the College Policy and Procedures and involves programme leaders completing a monitoring report; this is then forwarded to the Quality Assurance Committee who meet once per semester and then to the Academic Board who have final approval of the report. In addition, the Vice Principal (Academic) will extract all actions, monitor closure of all actions and update the Academic Board on such matters.

2.84   The College convenes annual internal Examination Boards; Progression Boards are organised as required. All awards are then passed through to the Quality Assurance Committee for accuracy and from there to the Academic Board who will ratify all award decisions. The Boards are chaired, serviced and managed by the College with the exception of the Quality Assurance Committee; this committee is chaired by an external representative. The Quality Assurance Committee, Academic Board and College Council, through the Vice Principal, monitor all higher education external examiner reports and from this improvements have been made – for example more online library resources, improved broadband connectivity, and easier access to the VLE.

2.85   College staff have been involved in an institutional review in 2014 and are preparing for a revalidation of its undergraduate programme with the University in 2017. In preparation for the revalidation the College holds a prevalidation meeting with the University. During the review visit academic staff were asked to explain their understanding of the Institutional Review process and the internal periodic review process. One member of the Training Team was able to clearly and accurately describe the purpose and operation of the Institutional

Review. Understanding of the periodic review processes and its importance in justifying the continuation of the programme, its relevance and currency was less clearly articulated by staff. Therefore, the review team **recommends** the College articulate the differences between the University's review processes and the internal periodic review of programmes to ensure the full engagement of staff.

2.86   Students are activity encouraged to participate in the monitoring and review process. Student representatives are elected from every level on each programme and meet with the Training Staff in the first two weeks of the academic year for a briefing on their role. All students are required to complete an end-of-module evaluation. Students are also represented on the Undergraduate and Postgraduate committees at the end of year exam boards. While students are informed about external examiner visits and meet them, they are not involved in the drafting of the response to the external examiner report. Placement reports are also considered in the monitoring and review process.

2.87   The College has effective monitoring processes in place which meet the requirements of the awarding body. The College follows the University's process for periodic review of programmes and staff are engaged in the process but the team found there was a lack of awareness between the institutional reapproval process and review of programmes and a subsequent recommendation has been identified. Therefore, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is moderate because the procedures relating to monitoring and review are broadly met but have some shortcomings in the terms of the rigour with which they are applied.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

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

2.88   The service-level agreement between the College and the University states that the College is responsible for handling student complaints and appeals. The College's procedures for handling academic appeals are set out in its Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure.

2.89   The complaints procedure is included in 'the guiding principles of all the college complaints, appeals and review procedures' document. Informal complaints will be acknowledged within seven calendar days, and investigated, 'wherever possible', within 14 calendar days of 'receiving all the relevant information'. Formal written complaints should be recorded and acknowledged within seven calendar days, and investigated 'wherever possible', within 30 calendar days. The total time for the full process should take no longer than 90 calendar days. Both policies are made available to students, staff and prospective students via the VLE and website respectively.

2.90   The College has established internal policies and procedures relating to student complaints and appeals which would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.91   The review team considered the Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure and supporting documents. Information provided online through the College website was accessed and meetings were held with both students and staff.

2.92   The Appeals and Complaints Policies and Procedure is extremely clear. It is also accessible, being made available on the VLE. The Academic Appeals Policy sets out grounds for appeal for different elements of assessment and how the appeal can be escalated both to the University and the OIA. It is also clear that the Chief Executive is responsible for the policy and that it is reviewed annually. These guidelines are also made available in Programme Handbooks. While these processes are not covered specifically in induction, students are able to identify where to find the relevant policy. The openness and honest relationship the student body has with the College staff ensures that students know where to go for support, including having the right to escalate to the University or the OIA as necessary.

2.93   The College has had very few formal complaints or appeals in recent years, and puts this down to their processes which enable issues to be resolved informally and in a timely manner. Students are encouraged to meet with staff, if desired, before pursuing formal action, facilitated through staff operating an open-door policy. When required, there is a clear four-stage complaints process, and a comprehensible complaint pro forma is provided to students. Students understand that if they wish to make a complaint, they should notify the programme leader and an administrator would then provide them with the relevant documentation, as well as understanding that the process is underpinned by a formal timeframe. The College explicitly states that no-one will be disadvantaged by making a complaint. The complaints policy does feature an unorthodox reference to 'biblical guidelines', but staff felt strongly that the reference simply refers to trying to resolve the complaint, and that therefore there is no conflict with the Expectation's requirements.

2.94   Information on student academic appeals can be found in the student handbook. Students can appeal within 14 days of receiving their final mark and can write to their programme leader who liaises with the relevant tutor and moderator to review the relevant assessment score. Senior staff have a good understanding of the procedure and were able to outline where students can go to for information. The two examples of an appeal provided, both from the MA programme, suggest the appeals process is strong and robust.

2.95   Academic staff have good knowledge of both the appeals process and procedure, as well as a good understanding of the process and timetable for complaints. Training and administrative staff have a pivotal role in ensuring the smooth running of the procedures, both from an administrative perspective, but also in ensuring the relevant training is provided to both academic and senior staff. For instance, during the recent updating of College policies, training was provided to ensure academic staff had a full understanding of the new policies. The staff are articulate and knowledgeable, providing considerable confidence that the relevant policies are implemented and maintained appropriately.

2.96   The College has procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints about the quality of learning opportunities which are fair, accessible and timely, and enable enhancement. Staff are aware of their responsibilities and students confirmed their awareness of available information and support. The review team therefore concludes 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

2.97   All undergraduate students undertake weekly ministry placements in local churches, projects or community groups which form part of the Level 4 Personal Development, Level 5 Personal Development and Ministry Skills and Level 6 Reflective Mission Practice modules all of which are core modules. At the end of the ministry placements all students are required to write a reflective report and placement providers provide a feedback report on each student. Level 5 students are also required to undertake a block placement usually in the summer break which contributes to the Personal Development and Ministry Skills module. Postgraduate students can undertake optional placements.

2.98   On all placements, students are monitored and supported by personal tutors, external supervisors and the Ministry Placement Coordinator. Placement handbooks are produced to support students and placement supervisors. Personal tutors produce a block placement report and external placement supervisors provide feedback of students' performance on placements. Placements are undertaken and assessed in accordance with University guidelines.

2.99   The management and processes for placements which enable the College to work with others effectively would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.100   The review team examined documents relating to placements and met College staff, students and placement providers.

2.101   Placements provide a very valuable opportunity for students to apply academic learning in a practical context and for practical experience on placements to inform their learning. The placements identified and used by the College often take place in challenging situations such as working with the homeless, difficult domestic situations, drug and alcohol abuse, food poverty, and acting as street pastors offering practical support and guidance to late-night revellers. These situations put students outside their usual life experience and expose them to the real-life situations they will encounter in their later missionary and community work. They provide opportunities for students to put their missionary learning into a socio-political and cross-cultural context, to understand the experience of others and to bring their experience of placements into their academic study and share it with their peers. Students commented very positively on the usefulness of placements, and providers expressed the value of students on placements to the work they do and several had continued the relationship with students after placements had been completed. The review team considers the extensive range of well-supported placement partnerships which enables students to develop wider skills and promotes their understanding of the complexities of missionary work to be **good practice**.

2.102   There is an effective support process for students who meet potential placement providers to ensure that they are suitable for a particular placement. This meeting is informed by the placement provider's knowledge and understanding of the College and its programmes. There is regular contact between College staff and placement providers and with students. Every effort is taken to ensure the safety of students all of whom are partnered with experienced missionary workers and they are never left alone in potentially

dangerous situations. Guidance, training and support material for placement providers is updated annually. Emergency contact with College staff is always available. Students are subject to Disclosure and Barring Service checks, which are paid for by the College. Assessment of placements is conducted by College staff in line with University regulations and includes written reports and presentations of the placement. Students and placement providers provide feedback on the placement experience. No elements of the College provision are delivered by other providers.

2.103   The College provides various placement opportunities depending on the programme and level of study. The structure, preparation and organisation of placements are well organised and communication is clear. The range and quality of the assessed placements are identified as good practice and students praised the opportunity and value of the placements which enhances their learning. Therefore, the review team concludes the Expectation is met and the associated level of 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*

2.104   The College does not offer research degrees, therefore this Expectation does not apply.

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.105   In reaching its judgement about the quality of student learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

2.106   Of the 10 applicable Expectations in this area all were met and with the exception of two Expectations all had low levels of associated risk. There are two features of good practice in this area and three recommendations.

2.107   The features of good practice are identified in Expectations B5 and B10. The review team found that the mechanisms for student engagement at the College are effective and students are considered as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their learning experience. An example of a mechanism having a positive impact is the weekly 'kick-off meetings' arranged every Monday morning and led and determined by students. These meetings, identified as good practice, provide an opportunity for students to engage with College staff and contribute to the inclusive and egalitarian learning environment.

2.108   Placements form an important and valued part of the provision and the compulsory placements help develop the practical and hands-on skills required for the challenging aspects of missionary work which students will have to face. The College has developed relationships with a range of placement providers which offer these opportunities to students and are mutually beneficial to the placement providers and the College. Students are carefully allocated the appropriate placement according to their needs and areas of interest and the current and developing relationships with placement providers ensures that there is a diverse range which students can engage with.

2.109   The three recommendations are to be found in Expectations B3, B6 and B8. The review team found that although the College has a Teaching and Learning Strategy, it is not fully developed as expected in that it does not account for the different modes of learning at the College, for example it does not reference distance learning students. In addition, although the strategy contains a number of teaching and learning aims it does not detail how the College ensures that the aims will be achieved.

2.110   The review team found that the timescales for student assessment feedback was an area of concern within both the student submission and in discussion with students. It was found that the five working week timescale could prove to be too long if applied before the end of a term in order for students to be informed on their next assignment. The review team acknowledges that the College can and do return feedback at times well in advance of the deadline but recommends that the timescale should be reviewed and consistently applied.

2.111   The final recommendation highlights the need for effective communication to academic staff about the difference in process between the University's Institutional Review and the periodic review of programmes. The review team found that there was a gap in the knowledge with staff about the two processes which could lead to an element of confusion and misunderstanding about the University and College requirements for reviewing provision.

2.112   The review team concludes that as all the Expectations are met, the quality of student learning opportunities at the College **meets** UK expectations.

3 Judgement: The quality of the information about learning opportunities

Expectation (C): UK higher education providers produce information for their intended audiences about the higher education they offer that is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

Quality Code, Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision

Findings

3.1 The College's main channels of public information are through the website, VLE and hard copy promotional materials. The guidelines for public information are set out through the University's 'Handbook for Validated Awards' and the College's internal 'Public Information Policy'. The Academic Board is responsible for signing off public information policies and this can be verified through Academic Board minutes. The Public Information Policy is split into two sections; external communication (prospective students, alumni and general public) and current students. In both sections, the policy sets out in detail the process for producing public information and how the College ensures it is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. It also sets out who is responsible for each respective section.

3.2 The College has appointed an Information and Learning Services Manager who is in charge of ensuring all published information is accurate and up to date. The Information and Learning Services Manager works with the Communications and Marketing Team and the Recruitment and Training Administrators to follow the formal procedures and ensure accessible and appropriate public information. The procedure for verifying the accuracy and completeness of all published information is provided. The Communications Manager is chiefly responsible for the process, although sign-off is provided by the programme leader or Chief Executive.

3.3 The College has established internal policies and procedures to enable accessible and trustworthy information which would enable the Expectation to be met.

3.4 The review team considered the College's Public Information Policy, committee minutes and supporting documentation. The review team considered information held on the College website and VLE and meetings were held with both students and staff.

3.5 The existence of a 'public information sign-off record' is good evidence of a robust mechanism to ensure the correct sign-off procedure is followed and that all of the required individuals participated in the sign-off. Professional staff have a good understanding of the sign-off process and their role within it. The Principal and Information and Learning Services Manager confirmed examples of the rigorous approval process for production, approval and monitoring of public information, through the new prospectus: content prepared by tutor and marketing, designed, sent to the Principal and Programme Leader, back to the Information and Learning Services Manager and then to print. The communications team has grown recently, helping to ensure consistency in the College's public information.

3.6 The Communications Administrator and the Marketing Administrator oversee the College's new website, which is easy to use and contains a large amount of information. The VLE is kept up to date by the Information and Learning Services Manager who keeps a log of any changes. The Information and Learning Services Manager is responsible, along with module staff, for ensuring consistency across the VLE and verifying that the information is uploaded as required. The whole communications and marketing team is responsible for the

workload for VLE sign-off, but the Information and Learning Services Manager has ultimate sign-off.

3.7   The VLE is easy to use and contains dedicated areas for the Student Committee and library, as well as having a function where students can report facility problems. Students are positive about the VLE with 89 per cent rating the helpfulness of the VLE as either good or very good, and students reporting it to be impressive and user-friendly, featuring lecture notes uploaded in advance, reading requirements, essay titles and library catalogue. Distance learning students have access to a different version of the VLE, which they use extensively, and indicated that the forums provide a good tool for asking questions to academic staff. This interactivity is something the College is investigating bringing to the campus VLE. All staff members are trained on how to use the VLE. The VLE can also be accessed through mobile and tablet, and the College has recently invested heavily in improved internet to assist in access to information for students. In addition, posts on the College's social media are subject to a robust checking and verification process.

3.8   Students are provided with a Leavers' Pack upon completion of their studies to allow the College to ensure they have up-to-date contact details and enable networking with graduates. The pack contains the necessary information to accomplish this as well as containing practical end-of-studies information and questionnaires. In addition, a positive and welcomed mechanism for capturing information from previous students has been established. A questionnaire is sent to graduates from the last five years asking for knowledge gaps which can help to inform changes in the curriculum.

3.9   Communication with staff is carried out through a number of tools: emails, meetings, staff coffee sessions and use of the VLE. The VLE in particular is an effective communications tool for staff, allowing them to use a staff forum and report any problems or maintenance requests directly through it. Staff are provided with access to the VLE prior to arrival to ease their induction, which works effectively. Staff communication is subject to a similarly robust sign-off procedure as other forms of public information. The 'kick-off' meetings, led by students and identified as good practice under Expectation B5, are another positive mechanism for sharing information.

3.10   The College produces information for their intended audiences about the higher education provision they offer that is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. Staff are aware of the sign-off procedures and students confirmed satisfaction with the quality and accessibility of the information available to them. Therefore, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The quality of the information about learning opportunities: Summary of findings

3.11   In reaching its positive judgement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook. The Expectation for this judgement area is met and the associated level of risk is low. There are no recommendations, affirmations or features of good practice. The review team therefore concludes that the quality of the information about learning opportunities at the College **meets** UK expectations.

4 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

4.1 A key aspect of the long-term institutional strategy as outlined by the Principal is to widen the access of the College not just regionally but globally. For this to happen the College must make itself more accessible to all students both within and outside of the UK. Part of the Vice Principal (Academic) role is to develop an enhancement strategy that will provide the opportunity for both EU and non-EU students to study at the College. As outlined by the Vice Principal (Academic), part of this strategy is to enhance the learning experience for students through improving the technological and virtual infrastructure for students. The College has recently improved their broadband connectivity and has upgraded their virtual platform to provide better access for both on campus and off campus students.

4.2 As well as a strategic vision of enhancement at a senior level, the College uses quality assurance processes such as programme monitoring, student evaluations and external examiner reports to inform enhancement and to develop initiatives which should lead to programme improvements and enhance learner opportunities. Strategic oversight of this process rests with the College Council and Academic Board who are supported by the Quality Assurance Committee.

4.3 The College's vision and developments for enhancement as well as using its existing systems for overseeing the quality of its provision and examples of initiatives arising from these systems would allow the Expectation to be met.

4.4 In testing the Expectation the review team considered the College's Strategy, the Teaching and Learning Strategy and other supporting documentation. The review team also meet with the Principal, senior and academic staff, students and placement providers.

4.5 College undergraduate students undertake a weekly ministry placement that consists of approximately two hours a week and also complete a block placement. The partnerships that the College has developed through these placement opportunities has enhanced the learning opportunities by providing students with a wider and deeper understanding of the social problems that many individuals living in society have to face. This enrichment opportunity is outlined in the College's head, heart and hands approach and is identified as good practice in Expectation B10.

4.6 The partnerships that the College has established extend also to visiting speakers who provide students with valuable insights into the potential difficulties they will face when working in the missionary field. Furthermore, staff within the College are encouraged to undertake a sabbatical every 10 years which provides students with invaluable first- hand experience of missionary life.

4.7 The work with externals of all kinds is also a positive enhancement for the College. Externals are encouraged to work at and with the College not only as examiners but to participate on College committee forums, and deliver guest lectures. At the time of the review the College was working with external agencies and other stakeholders to provide 'hubs' to develop further links and outreach and to feed into future revalidation activities. Collectively, the review team concludes that the wide range of external partnerships which promotes the development of an enriched curriculum and enhances the students' understanding of cultural and religious differences between societies is **good practice**.

4.8   The College has a Teaching and Learning Strategy that provides supportive information on assessment. In addition, the College has an annual appraisal system that offers opportunities for peer observation and discourse between staff. Staff development opportunities implemented by the College are effective and feed well into the overall College Strategy 2015-20. There is an opportunity for the College to reflect and review these activities and to collate the information more formally and provide a platform for wider dissemination across the College and allow staff to reflect on the effectiveness of their pedagogical skills.

4.9   Students' role in enhancement is identified through student evaluations, general feedback and through the student representative system which is seen as a conduit for students and staff to communicate. The 'kick-off' meetings are identified as good practice in Expectation B5 and are another example of where students are encouraged to engage with the College in a positive way. Students confirmed that their feedback has led to broadband improvement and their access to wireless computer access, the VLE and electronic library provision. Students are positive about the quality of the College, its facilities and the improvements that have taken place.

4.10   The College takes deliberate steps at provider level to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities through the College's vision of accessibility of provision globally, its use of external input and engagement which has been identified as good practice and through its quality assurance mechanisms alongside effective student engagement, Therefore, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the level of associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

4.11   In reaching its positive judgement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook. The Expectation for this judgement area is met and the associated level of risk is low. There are no recommendations and one area of good practice is identified.

4.12   In the good practice, the review team found that the College's approach and strategic use of external input and external partnerships is embedded throughout its provision and helps to strengthen, enhance and inform the curriculum. Students confirmed that this external input and exposure to practice and experience shared was a valued part of their learning. The College embraces a variety of external partnerships and is building on this aspect by developing a hub of external links. The review team therefore concludes that the enhancement of student learning opportunities at the College **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 21-24 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.

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