



Higher Education Review of Basingstoke College of Technology

October 2014

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About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Basingstoke College of Technology. The review took place from 22 to 24 October 2014 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Professor Geoffrey Elliott
- Dr Simon Jones
- Mr Ken Harris (student reviewer).

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provided by Basingstoke College of Technology 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 the QAA review team:

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

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.

In reviewing Basingstoke College of Technology the review team has also considered a theme selected for particular focus across higher education in England and Northern Ireland.

The [themes](#) for the academic year 2014-15 are Student Involvement in Quality Assurance and Enhancement and Student Employability,² and the provider is required to select, in consultation with student representatives, one of these themes to be explored through the review process.

The QAA website gives more information [about QAA](#) and its mission.³ A dedicated section explains the method for [Higher Education Review](#)⁴ and has links to the review handbook and other informative documents. For an explanation of terms see the [glossary](#) at the end of this report.

¹ The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at: www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code.

² Higher Education Review themes: www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=106

³ QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us.

⁴ Higher Education Review web pages: www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/how-we-review-higher-education/higher-education-review.

Key findings

QAA's judgements about Basingstoke College of Technology

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at Basingstoke College of Technology.

- The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of its degree-awarding body and awarding organisation **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 Basingstoke College of Technology.

- The College's responsiveness to student needs in order to provide an effective learning environment and materials to enhance their learning experience (Expectation B4).
- The openness of staff at every level, enabling early resolutions of problems and reducing the potential for student complaint and appeal (Expectation B9).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations** to Basingstoke College of Technology.

By April 2015:

- the College should make clear and transparent to students the admission procedures to be undertaken in order to be accepted onto a course (Expectations B2 and C).

By September 2015:

- the College should consider taking steps, as its higher education provision develops, to engage higher education students within the formal representative and committee structure (Expectation B5)
- the College should formalise its approach to enhancement so as to support the growth of its higher education provision (Enhancement).

Affirmation of action being taken

The QAA review team **affirms** the following actions that the Basingstoke College of Technology is already taking to make academic standards secure and/or improve the educational provision offered to its students.

- There are no affirmations.

Theme: Student Employability

Basingstoke College of Technology aims to be known for the quality of its links and successful work with employers and it seeks to deploy these relationships to enhance its provision and improve students' employability and career enhancement. It is particularly committed to the flexible delivery of its curriculum for those already in employment. The College is committed to developing in students the specific skills wanted by employers and to securing professional accreditation for all its higher education programmes. Employment attributes are embedded in the curriculum and regular enrichment weeks provide opportunities for lectures from employers and visits to employment settings.

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

About Basingstoke College of Technology

Basingstoke College of Technology is a general further education college in an urban setting in the Borough of Basingstoke, situated in mainly rural north Hampshire. There are some 12,000 students, with 178 of those in higher education, though the number is currently lower. The vast majority of its courses are employment related and it offers apprenticeships and a range of commercial courses. Its vision is 'to inspire every learner to succeed', and it seeks to be a 'pathway to the future'. Its mission includes the aspiration 'to provide high quality education and training that transforms lives'.

Through its higher education provision the College aims to provide more flexible and cost-effective learning opportunities than traditional universities. It is also seeking to develop employer-funded full-cost programmes and an international market with China, underpinned by a partnership with a further validating institution.

The numbers of higher education students has declined in recent years and there are currently 28 HEFCE allocated full-time equivalent numbers. A full-time BA (Hons) programme in Textiles for Fashion has run for 16 years, validated for the last six years by the University of Winchester and revalidated in 2013. Part-time qualifications for education and training and Edexcel HNC and HND Engineering programmes are delivered in partnership with Pearson, with a full-time HND in Travel and Tourism beginning in September 2014. At the time of the review the curriculum provision comprised:

- BA (Hons) Textiles for Fashion - full-time - validated by the University of Winchester
- Edexcel HND Business (Year 2 only) - full-time
- Edexcel HNC Business (Year 2 only) - part-time
- Edexcel Engineering - part-time
- Edexcel Suite of Qualifications for Education and Training - part-time
- HND Travel and Tourism (Year 1 only) - full-time
- HND Engineering (Year 1 only) - full-time.

The College aims to develop distance learning provision in business using high quality interactive computer technology to supplement its own virtual learning environment and to introduce new flexible routes into degree programmes. It is introducing a new website specifically for higher education students to facilitate more direct access to relevant information. At the time of the review, a new Memorandum of Cooperation was about to be signed with a new university partner, Southampton Solent University, primarily to develop progression routes for Chinese students.

Since the last QAA review in 2010, responsibility for higher education has moved to the Assistant Principal of Curriculum and Quality Improvement. There has been considerable investment in facilities, including the Mark Book system which allows students to access their grades and keep track of assignment deadlines. Programme and module handbooks have also migrated to the virtual learning environment, to ensure up-to-date information and enhance student autonomy. Blue Sky technology has also been introduced to track staff continuing professional development and training.

The QAA review in 2010 made four advisable recommendations and two desirable recommendations, together with four instances of good practice on which to develop. The self-evaluation document, submitted as part of the Higher Education Review process, sets out the actions which have been taken to address the recommendations and enhance the identified good practice. The College has submitted evidence that it addressed the recommendations of the QAA review seriously and gives a high priority to quality assurance.

Explanation of the findings about Basingstoke College of Technology

This section explains the review findings in more detail.

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

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

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* 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 has a limited portfolio of higher education programmes, awarded through Pearson and University of Winchester. Since it does not have degree awarding powers, its role is to support the maintenance of academic standards on behalf of its degree-awarding body and awarding organisation, and reports to each in accordance with their reporting timetables.

1.2 The review team explored the setting and maintenance of the academic standards of awards in a series of meetings with senior management and teaching staff of the College and, additionally, the University of Winchester's liaison officer, and with students of both the honours degree and HND/C programmes. The College's understanding is that its partners have final responsibility to meet the expectation on alignment of its awards with *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ). BTEC HNDs are located in the National Qualifications Framework, awarded by Pearson and regulated by Ofqual. The College has no role in setting these standards for its awards and the review team found limited awareness among teaching staff of the National Qualifications Framework and the FHEQ.

1.3 The review team saw that external examiner reports confirm that national academic standards are being maintained. The College harmonises external approaches in its own assessment policy and internal verification process. Pearson's core modules are heavily prescribed which secures the College's approach to the alignment of assessment to learning outcomes and programme standards. The review team heard that in addition to relying on external examiner reporting to ensure national standards are met, the recent validation of awards had used Subject Benchmark Statements (where available) and relied on the University of Winchester templates as necessary.

1.4 The review team concludes that the College is largely reliant on its degree-awarding body and awarding organisation to ensure academic threshold standards are met. Nonetheless, insofar as Pearson's modular approach is highly prescriptive, and the University of Winchester's bachelor's award has been recently revalidated, the College is effective in maintaining academic standards on behalf of its degree-awarding body and awarding organisation. The suggested appointment of a Higher Education Manager and a proposed Higher Education Strategic Review in the coming academic year suggests the College is aware of the potential risk to standards associated with a proposed expansion of the higher education portfolio. The Expectation is therefore met, with a low degree of associated risk.

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

1.5 Since it does not have degree awarding powers, the role of the College is to support the maintenance of academic standards on behalf of its degree-awarding body and awarding organisation. The College understands that its partners have final responsibility to ensure that they have transparent and comprehensive regulations to govern how they award academic credit and it reports regularly to them in accordance with its requirements.

1.6 The review team tested these arrangements in examining governance arrangements, academic frameworks and assessment regulations. It read evidence submitted by the College, met senior staff, teaching staff and a representative of the University of Winchester, and spoke with employers.

1.7 The review team found that both the University of Winchester and Pearson offer academic frameworks and assessment regulations. This was confirmed in a meeting with senior staff. Additionally, the College maintains its own threshold and academic standards through its Assessment Policy and Quality Improvement Plan; and through active review, by reports followed through the Senior Management Team for action. The review team found evidence that these arrangements are overseen through the College's current governance structures and continue to develop with the proposed appointment of a Director for Higher Education.

1.8 The review team found the frameworks to secure the award of credit to be appropriate and effective in operation and concludes that the Expectation is therefore met, with a low degree of risk.

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

1.9 The College does not have degree awarding powers. Degrees are delivered through Pearson and the University of Winchester who have final responsibility for the academic standards of all credit and qualifications awarded. The College has processes in place which suggests it is aware of its responsibilities in relation to those of their partners.

1.10 The review team tested these arrangements with respect to the College's systems and processes for keeping definitive records of the programmes delivered on behalf of the awarding body. The team looked at documents including Institutional Approval of the Prospective Partner Organisation, a number of documents relating to accreditation of higher education programmes, the Operational Handbook for Textiles for Fashion, and the revalidation self-assessment document for BA Textiles. The team also looked at a policy for the Quality Assurance of Collaborative provisions and Pearson Handbooks. It also met a range of staff from the College, awarding body and students.

1.11 The team found that the Operational Handbook provided detailed information and outlines the responsibilities of the College Programme Leader and University Academic Liaison Officer. In meetings with the senior staff the team was able to find that the College is visited by the awarding partner throughout the year; the team is satisfied with these arrangements. The Pearson handbooks provided by the College demonstrate its responsibilities to the awarding organisation, and on examining the Pearson Quality Reports the team found that the College appear to be satisfying the required conditions.

1.12 Looking for definitive records, the review team explored the College website and looked at information on the BA (Hons) Textiles for Fashion Course and HND programmes. Definitive records for the HND programmes and qualification are provided on the College website and include amendments where appropriate. The team also found course information about modules. The University of Winchester specifies the requirement to use definitive programme documentation, and the review team found evidence suggesting that the College is aware of its responsibilities. Programme approval is done at the awarding partner and ratified by its Academic Standards Committee. The review team looked at the validation report for textiles which confirms that the panel was satisfied with the arrangements for the management of standards and quality, including the programme specification. In meetings with staff the review team was able to confirm that the program validation documentation is initiated and written by the College and concluded that this demonstrated engagement and understanding of the process.

1.13 Overall the review team found that the validation reports, and the close link with the awarding body and its confidence in the College, demonstrated that the College has processes in place to provide a documentary reference point for the delivery, assessment, monitoring and review of its programmes of study and the provision of records. The review team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the level of risk 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*

1.14 The review team looked at the processes for the approval of taught programmes to ensure that academic standards are set at a level which meets the UK threshold standard for the qualification and are in accordance with the appropriate academic frameworks and regulations, by talking to staff and students, and reading the minutes and papers of meetings that staff and students attend. The review team found evidence that the policies, procedures and practices with regard to securing academic standards, and an outcomes-based approach to academic awards, are aligned to *Chapter A3* of the Quality Code.

1.15 The College does not have degree awarding powers. It delivers its higher education programmes through the University of Winchester for textiles and fashion and Pearson for mechanical engineering. The design and approval of modules, programmes and qualifications is the responsibility of the awarding partners.

1.16 The modules on the textiles and fashion programme were designed and developed in partnership between the College and the awarding body but approved through the normal validation and approval processes of the University of Winchester, where the monitoring and review of the alignment with UK threshold standards, and the degree-awarding body's own standards, are considered and approved. The University incorporates the course into its annual cycle of quality and standards monitoring, and reporting. Further external reference points for award standards are provided for the Engineering courses through accreditation with the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE) and the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET). The College has accreditation with both IMechE and IET for EngTech status for all Level 3 and Level 4 apprenticeships.

1.17 Overall, the review team concludes that the College consistently implements processes for the approval of taught programmes, through the academic infrastructure of the awarding bodies, that ensure academic standards are set at a level which meets the UK threshold standard for the qualification. These are in accordance with its own and the awarding body's academic frameworks and regulations and meet the expectation in *Chapter A3* of the Quality Code, with a low degree of risk.

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

1.18 The review team looked at the processes for the approval of taught programmes to ensure that academic standards are set at a level which meets the UK threshold standard for the qualification and are in accordance with its own academic frameworks and regulations by talking to staff and students, and reading the minutes and papers of meetings that staff and students attend. The review team found evidence that the policies, procedures and practices with regard to securing academic standards, and an outcomes based approach to academic awards, are aligned to *Chapter A3* of the Quality Code.

1.19 The College higher education handbook underpins its approach to higher education provision and delivery. The review team heard evidence that the College has five main strategies to safeguard academic standards, and to secure the quality of learning opportunities. These are the Quality Strategy; Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy; Course Review and Evaluation Strategy; Self-Assessment Process and the Learner Involvement Strategy. The review team also saw evidence of the Course Review and Evaluation process in support of the maintenance of UK and College threshold standards and found this to be fit for purpose.

1.20 With final responsibility for the design and approval of modules, programmes and qualifications, it is the University of Winchester and Pearson who are tasked with ensuring that the output of standards of the awards is equivalent to those for the same or similar award for their programmes. However, the review team learned that the College exercises responsibility in practice for the design of the BA (Hons) Textiles for Fashion and wrote the revalidation documentation, which was well received by the University. The University of Winchester and Pearson monitor and review, through external examiners and verifiers, and annual quality review, the standards and quality of their awards delivered by the College. Learning outcomes are monitored by the awarding partners through the relevant annual course and module review process. The review team read and heard evidence that the Senior Management Team receives a monthly report enabling the senior management of the College to identify areas of concern and where there may be issues with standards.

1.21 Overall, the review team concludes that the College consistently implements processes for the approval of taught programmes, through the awarding partners. The review team found that these ensure academic standards are set at a level which meets the UK threshold standard for the qualification and are in accordance with its own academic frameworks and regulations, meeting the expectation in *Chapter A3* of the Quality Code. The level of risk is therefore 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

Findings

1.22 The review team tested the relationship between the College and its awarding body providers and found this to be effective. The University of Winchester and Pearson monitor academic standards through their own quality monitoring processes. The quality of programme provision in the College is assured through annual and periodic review and the use of external examiners and external verifiers.

1.23 Monitoring and review of alignment with UK threshold academic standards and degree-awarding bodies' own standards is the responsibility of the awarding partners and their internal processes of external examining, awarding body review, and moderation. The College follows a Quality Improvement Plan as a guide for improving quality and enhancing the student experience. In addition, the review team found sound evidence of the College undertaking its own quality assessment and course review and evaluation. The review team found this process to be appropriate and fit for purpose, and an effective approach to monitoring and review of programmes and student achievement.

1.24 The review team found evidence of Pearson monitoring standards and award outcomes through annual course review and engagement with the College to ensure threshold standards are maintained. The review team read documentation from the examination and review process from the past three years and found evidence of threshold academic standards being set, maintained and aligned with national reference points and benchmarks. The College follows the University of Winchester and Pearson policies and practices when working with external examiners and external verifiers to ensure threshold academic standards are set and maintained at the required level.

1.25 The review team, through the scrutiny of documents and meeting staff, found that the College followed the policies and regulations of the awarding bodies with regard to assessment and examination. The review team heard that the University of Winchester operate a two-tier examination board process where an internal board is held at the College and the marks and awards are confirmed by a second-tier examination board at the University.

1.26 Overall, the review team concludes that the College consistently implement processes for the approval of taught programmes, through its degree-awarding body and awarding organisation, that ensure 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 and meet the expectation in *Chapter A3* of the Quality Code.

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

1.27 The College has clearly established design and approval mechanisms for modules, programmes and qualifications. It describes working closely with University of Winchester in order to ensure academic standards are set at a level to meet UK thresholds. Its external examiners provide evidence that learning outcomes are assessed appropriately.

1.28 The review team explored these processes with staff and with students, and found there was familiarity with the systems operated by the degree-awarding body and awarding organisation. Moreover, the team found evidence that the College would take steps at all levels to ensure that standards were being maintained.

1.29 The review team found the College to be effective in remaining outwardly facing in its attitude, and confident in its approach to public scrutiny (for example in its presentation of fashion portfolios, and engineering students working with their employers). Likewise the review team heard evidence of the College's engagement with employers and professional bodies.

1.30 The review team also read evidence that the degree-awarding body and awarding organisation are happy with the design and approval of recently revalidated provision, that employers current in the sector contribute to keeping the curriculum up to date, and that professional bodies accredit the provision. Consequently, the review team was able to verify that the College secures academic standards in a transparent and publicly accountable fashion, using external and independent expertise at key stages. Therefore the Expectation is met with a low degree of risk.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

1.31 In reaching its positive judgement on threshold standards the review team considered how, as a provider without degree-awarding powers, the College discharged its responsibility for the maintenance of academic standards towards its awarding body and awarding organisation.

1.32 The review team found that the College understood its obligations to Pearson and to the University. Its procedures were aligned with the frameworks and regulations of its partners, fulfilling their requirements with respect to design and approval of programmes, definitive course records, assessment, external examining and annual monitoring and periodic review. Although the College's plans to embark on additional university partnership will generate more complexity, it is aware of the risk and is putting in place mechanisms to manage the development.

1.33 The review team found the College's procedures to be appropriate and effective throughout in maintaining threshold academic standards and, although it did not identify any specific examples of good practice, neither did it make any recommendations in this area and overall it found the degree of risk to be low. The review team therefore concludes that the threshold academic standards of awards set by the degree-awarding body and organisation are being maintained by Basingstoke College of Technology.

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 and approval of programmes.

Quality Code, Chapter B1: Programme Design and Approval

Findings

2.1 The review team saw documented and verbal evidence of effective programme design and approval. The BA (Honours) Textiles for Fashion course had recently been revalidated to ensure an iterative process of development to improve the learning experience for students, and to maintain the currency of the curriculum.

2.2 The review team heard evidence that the purpose and nature of programme design was to ensure that changes in curriculum are based around industry standards and acquiring and developing skills in order to demonstrate key employability expertise. A key theme of the College's Higher Education Strategy is employability.

2.3 The review team found evidence that the awarding partners maintained strategic oversight of the processes for, and outcomes of, programme design, development and approval, to ensure processes are applied systematically and operated consistently. There is clear evidence that the awarding partners make clear the criteria against which programme proposals are assessed in the programme approval process and this is robustly complied with by the College and education providers enabling staff and other participants to contribute effectively to programme design, development and approval by putting in place appropriate arrangements for their support and development.

2.4 The review team found evidence that the process of programme design and approval is robust, effective, and fit for purpose, and the College is compliant with the awarding partners' regulations, policies and guidelines. The review team read and heard evidence of the process for approval and revalidation and found this to be coherent and transparent.

2.5 Overall, the review team concludes that the College, in cooperation with the awarding partners, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operates effective processes for the design, development and approval of programmes. The College's procedures are fully aligned with *Chapter B1* of the Quality Code in programme design and approval and meet the Expectation.

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*

Findings

2.6 The College has policies and processes in place governing the selection, admission and induction of students which, for the BA award, follow the procedures defined by the University. Its own policies are designed to enable fair admission and widening participation, working to address diversity and provide opportunities to those who would not usually apply to higher education. It also has ambitions for increasing its recruitment of overseas students and procedures to govern their recruitment.

2.7 The admissions policy is regularly reviewed in accordance with the College's key policy and reporting procedures policy.

2.8 The review team explored these processes through documentary evidence including the Admissions Policy, We Welcome All Policy, programme committee meeting minutes, and a document on the admission of overseas students. Meetings were held with the Principal, senior staff, students and teaching and support staff.

2.9 In testing this evidence the review team found that the processes are fair and largely clear. The College embraces widening participation and has a separate policy for accepting students with criminal convictions. Once admitted, student achievement is mapped in accordance with its learner journey procedures. A senior member of staff coordinates admissions although there was no evidence that they had undertaken recent training and updating. A process is in place for appeals against admission decisions although no appeals had been made since this was created in 2007. Staff demonstrated the ways in which the admissions process is conducted so as to be sensitive to individual needs and support a smooth transition to higher education. The review team tested the experience of students on the admissions process and they spoke positively about the recruitment and enrolment processes and the availability of information to assist with their decisions.

2.10 The review team discovered a potential ambiguity over admissions interviews and selection, with a difference in information presented on UCAS and the College's own website. The review team found that although all students do receive an interview, in accordance with stated policy, this can be relatively informal and therefore its definition and role in selection may be unclear. The review team therefore **recommends** that, in order to resolve issues over what constitutes an interview, the College should make clear and transparent to students the admissions procedures to be undertaken in order to be accepted onto a course. Notwithstanding this recommendation, the review team concludes that in general the College's approach meets the expectations of *Chapter B2* of the Quality Code on clear, fair and explicit admissions procedures, consistently applied, and the associated risk is moderate.

Expectation: Met

Level of risk: Moderate

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

2.11 The College aims to provide high quality education and training that transforms lives so that every student is enabled to develop as an independent learner. The College also aims to ensure a high quality and safe environment in which to learn. The design and approval of modules, programmes and qualifications follows an established approval process, and is monitored through external examiner review and annual monitoring review. All programmes are annually monitored and periodically reviewed.

2.12 The key element of the basis for effective learning and teaching is the College's Course Review and Evaluation process and supported by the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy and guidance and advice through the Teacher Handbook 2013-2014.

2.13 The student experience is articulated through the College's Learner Journey and Ensuring Learner Success. Student engagement is captured by the College's Learner Involvement Strategy and the Course Review and Evaluation strategy. The College seeks to secure an effective learning environment that utilises technologies and e-learning.

2.14 All staff are inducted to the College and engaged in a variety of continuing professional development, Learning and Teaching Conferences, and other training opportunities.

2.15 The review team investigated the basis for effective learning and teaching at the College through meetings with students and staff. The team learned that the key process to ensure effective learning and teaching is the College's Course Review and Evaluation process, supported by the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy and guidance and advice through the Teacher Handbook 2013-2014. The design and approval of modules, programmes and qualifications follows an established approval and review process. Likewise, the College's success is monitored through external examiner review while an appropriately critical annual monitoring review helps underpin the effectiveness of the Learner Journey discussed in the review of Expectation B4.

2.16 All staff are inducted to the College and engaged in a variety of continuing professional development activities, Learning and Teaching Conferences, and other training opportunities. In testing the appropriateness of these measures, the review team found that for training in higher education issues the College was largely dependent on the University. In the College, all members of the teaching team are required to undertake a teacher training qualification, though there appears to be a desire for higher education continuing professional development sessions to be delivered exclusively. While more extensive continuing professional development might be available at the University of Winchester, sessions have been delivered at the College as the need arises.

2.17 The review team explored the student learning experience finding that the College articulated this through the Learner Journey and Ensuring Learner Success. The review team found that indication, feedback and engagement were all well received by the learner community. The College seeks to secure an effective learning environment that utilises

technologies and e-learning. While learners reported mixed views of the virtual learning environment's ease of use and the consistency of quantity in materials available to support learning, it was generally agreed that technology is used effectively by staff to support student learning. Students also spoke in positive terms about the responsiveness of the College to their needs and the general improvements to facilities for their learning, such as the dedicated study room for higher education learners. This evidence contributes to the good practice identified by the review team in relation to Expectation B4.

2.18 The review team explored each of the Indicators evidencing this Expectation and concluded that the College articulates and systematically reviews and enhances the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices that every student can develop as an independent learner, study their chosen subject in depth and enhance their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking. Consequently the Expectation is met, with a low degree of risk.

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

2.19 The key element of the basis for effective learning and teaching is the College's Course Review and Evaluation and supported by the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy and guidance and advice through the Teacher Handbook 2013-2014. The College identifies that the induction process in the College enables all staff to engage with central policies to promote academic practice.

2.20 The student experience is articulated through the College's Learner Journey and Ensuring Learner Success. The Academic Skills workshop is an interesting approach to achieving effective student transition. The Academic Skills workshop is the College's approach to achieving effective student transition.

2.21 The review team examined the effectiveness of the College's Course Review and Evaluation which, together with the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, and guidance and advice through the Teacher Handbook 2013-2014, is identified by the College as the basis for teaching and learning quality. The review team found evidence that the strategic approaches the College adopts to course management through utilising the Course Review and Evaluation process enables increasing confidence to be invested in the potential for enhancement. Information captured through the Course Review and Evaluation process is the basis for the Academic Committee to form judgements of student development and achievement; students are familiar with the system and see the results. Results from the Course Review and Evaluation process also support the focus groups and Learner Parliament.

2.22 The review team heard that the College ensures standardisation of reporting and action planning and monitoring, aligned with robust quality procedures, overseen by senior management and conducted by College teaching staff. This approach to quality was well recognised by students, who reported playing a regular and active part in the Course Review and Evaluation process. They also understood their own role in their learning demonstrating a familiarity with the handbook provision, and participation in the academic skills workshops. Moreover, the review team heard that the College was effective in meeting student needs in relation to the curriculum, assessment feedback and changing needs around learning resources. Its responsiveness to student needs in order to create an effective learning environment and materials to enhance their learning experience is **good practice**.

2.23 The review team assessed the arrangements for enabling student development and achievement, and found them to be effective. The review team concludes that the Expectation in *Chapter B4* of the Quality Code is met and presents a low level of risk.

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

2.24 The College takes steps to value the student contribution by way of informed conversations, with a Learner Involvement Strategy to drive the direction for student engagement in the College and systems in place to enable its effective delivery. These include a formal student representatives system and deliberative higher structures such as the Learner Parliament and a Higher Education Forum. The College has a students' union and students are members of various college committees and boards including the Board of Governors. The results of issued resolved as a result of student comment can be communicated through the virtual learning environment and *You Said We Did* feedback.

2.25 The review team looked at minutes and papers from committee meetings that included Programme Committee Meeting minutes, College's Board of Corporation minutes, and papers from the Learner Parliament and Learner Council together with the Student Handbook. The review team also looked at meetings and committees' minutes in order to see the level of student contribution, such as HND HNC Meeting minutes. The review team examined the student submission, and held meetings with staff and students. The team also looked at documents that defined the role of student representatives.

2.26 The review team investigated the operation of the student voice system and the ways that the College takes steps to value the student contribution by way of informed conversations. The team found that there are documents in place that clearly define the role of a student representative and their responsibilities, and the training and support available for course representatives. Meetings with students confirmed that they were aware of these documents and how student feedback impacts on their experiences. The review team also found evidence of an informal approach to capturing the experiences of students throughout the college by way of focus groups with heads of department, as mentioned in the Student Handbook and heard examples of informal discussions in meetings held with the senior staff, support staff and students. The College has an open door policy which also serves to capture the opinions of students. In general the review team found that the student voice system provides good opportunities for dialogue and responding to student issues and this is evident throughout the College.

2.27 Ways of capturing the learner voice are specified within the Learning and Teaching Handbook and the review team examined Course Review and Evaluation reports for examples in practice. A specific section within the Course Review and Evaluation is titled Learner Voice and there are opportunities for students to comment on all areas of their course. It was evident that Course Review and Evaluation is the major vehicle the College uses for collecting feedback and comments from the student body and that students are aware of Course Review and Evaluation completion and their purpose. However, Course Review and Evaluation form completions were discussed minimally at the Higher Education Forum.

2.28 In exploring the level of student engagement the review team saw instances of issues discussed at course meetings and end of unit feedback forms. It also looked at evidence from Learner Council Departmental meetings where such activity was evident but mostly at further education level. There were opportunities for the views of higher education students to be fed in, but there was limited activity. Upon further testing it was evident that there was not a clear defined system of recruiting representatives and a lack of a consistent

training process for representatives. There was no higher education representation on the Board of Governors and although relevant student opinion was captured and discussed at learner parliament, there were no higher education students on this committee nor on the Higher Education Forum. In practice the student voice system is not fully embraced by students at higher education level and is seen chiefly as a mechanism for engagement of further education students. Students do not sit on validation boards and there is limited evidence of students as equal partners in quality assurance. In light of this, to allow higher education students to see the benefits of involvement in deliberative bodies, the review team **recommends** that the College should take steps to engage higher education students within the formal representation and committee structure.

2.29 Notwithstanding the conclusion that further work is needed to realise the potential for student engagement in quality assurance and enhancement, the review team found that the College does have policies and procedures in place that allow for such engagement and the mechanisms for an effective representative system. It also found evidence that students were listened to and their views acted upon. Therefore the Expectation is met and risk found to be moderate.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

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

2.30 The review team found evidence that the College operates a range of assessments within the assessment regulations, policies and practices of its degree-awarding body and awarding organisation and these are aligned to the Quality Code, FHEQ and Subject Benchmark Statements.

2.31 The review team found evidence that the assessment of students and the recognition of prior learning was effective. The College policies and processes, and those of the partner institutions, underpin the setting and maintenance of academic standards with reference to the relevant higher education qualification framework and Subject Benchmark Statements. The review team heard evidence that the College teaching staff follow internal guidance for the assessment process. These are internally verified and standardised by moderation and the external examiner process. The College follows the processes and practices outlined by University of Winchester for its examination boards which are where student performance is judged against standards within the frameworks of the awarding body.

2.32 The review team found that guidance on assessment and assessment methods are made available to learners through the Higher Education Handbook. The review team heard and read evidence from staff that learners are given detailed support at the beginning of their programme on contextualisation and higher level thinking skills to enable them to be able to achieve the academic standards set out by the College at the commencement of their study. An induction programme was provided for new students but the details and content of these sessions appeared vague to students.

2.33 The review team heard evidence that the College follow an Accreditation of Prior Learning and Recognition of Prior Learning policy but were informed that the use of Accreditation of Prior Learning was rare. The review team were informed that for programmes validated by the University of Winchester, there is a separate form and guidance alongside these processes.

2.34 The review team was assured by the evidence that the College maintains the integrity of its academic awards and procedures by ensuring that all curriculum staff are aware of the College policy regarding plagiarism, cheating and collusion, and trains staff to be aware of academic misconduct. The College also applies an Extenuating Circumstances policy. The College encourages students to inform the University whenever they are experiencing difficulties and, where appropriate, to request an extension to the deadline for submission of a piece of work, to defer a formal examination, practical assessment or viva or to request a temporary leave of absence.

2.35 Overall, the review team concludes that the University is engaged with a range of approaches to assessment design and grading and, in conjunction with the awarding partners, operated 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. The review team concludes that the College meets Expectation B6 of the Quality Code on the assessment of students and the recognition of prior learning, with a consequent low degree of risk.

Expectation: Met

Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, Chapter B7: External Examining

Findings

2.36 The College identifies course external examiners as integral to the quality assurance of its programmes. Their role includes the review of proposed assessments, verification of grades, and confirmation of threshold standards, together with visits to the College and meetings with staff and students. External examiner appointment and induction is the responsibility of the degree-awarding body and awarding organisation. Their reports are captured by an annual internal overview report and are generally positive about performance within courses and about the achievement of national standards.

2.37 The review team explored the relationship with external examiners through reading documentation and meeting with College staff and students. The team learned that external examiners review teaching staff curricula vitae, learning resources for courses and contribute directly or indirectly to programme strategy and development. The review team noted that external examiner reports are not routinely shared with students, except in the BA for the sections of the report deemed non-confidential. The College does not think it appropriate to share HNC and HND reports with students, and staff expressed some scepticism about the value of these relatively brief and factual documents for quality enhancement purposes.

2.38 The review team found from its reading that external examiners are positive about student achievement on the College's programmes. In its discussion with staff and students it was able to confirm that the external examiner for the BA (Hons) Textile for Fashion has visited the College annually and met with year groups and sometimes with individual students to discuss their learning experience. The review team was also able to verify that external examiner reports have been factored into manual monitoring and review mechanisms.

2.39 The review team concludes that, generally, the College ascribed value to examiners' reports and, within the limits of the awarding bodies' procedures, used them effectively for the quality assurance of its programmes. The review team therefore concludes that the College makes scrupulous use of external examiners and that the Expectation of Chapter B7 of the Quality Code is met, with a low risk.

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

2.40 The review team found evidence that the College had an appropriate quality cycle in place to provide appropriate learning opportunities that enabled the intended learning outcomes of the higher education programme to be achieved. The review team found the course review and evaluation process and quality improvement plan to be evidence of monitoring and reflection upon improving learning opportunities.

2.41 There was evidence that teaching staff actively take course and module information and evaluate and reflect on their programme through the use of Course Review and Evaluation which takes into account early leavers, learners with poor attendance, and focus group findings, and ultimately forms an action plan which continues to feed through the Course Review and Evaluation process. Analysis of course review and evaluation data is reflected upon in the self-assessment reports and resulting quality improvement plan which will also include recommendations from external examiners. The review team heard that the quality improvement plan is revisited by the Senior Management Team at regular performance management meetings.

2.42 The review team found the programme monitoring and review process of the awarding bodies to be sound and robust in connection with the College. The review team heard evidence that the BA (Honours) Textiles for Fashion programme goes through the University scrutiny process where improvements from the programme are identified, evaluated and an action plan is produced feeding a continuous quality improvement loop to inform the next phase of the course.

2.43 The review team concludes that the College, in conjunction with the awarding partners, operates effective, regular and systematic processes for monitoring and for review of programmes. The review team concludes that Expectation B8 of the Quality Code is met, with a low degree of risk.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints

Findings

2.44 The College has a number of systems and processes in place that enable students to make academic appeals and complaints about the quality of their learning opportunities. It operates separate formal processes, those of the University of Winchester and of Pearson, alongside its own policy specifically for the College and students and staff are aware of the appropriate route to follow.

2.45 In testing the evidence the review team met senior staff, academics, students and staff involved in student support and looked at a range of documentation from the College and its awarding body, including the College complaints policy, academic regulations, guidance on dealing with malpractice, the Pearson quality review report, and academic appeals of exams.

2.46 The College has a number of documents specifically for students of the College. A document with flowchart details the appeals process for Learner Assessment Appeals. There are four stages, all clearly detailed, defining the stages of the process and making clear the difference between types of complaints and the procedures concerning appeals. This document was reviewed and tested in 2009. In meetings with students the team found that students were aware of the processes and how to engage with them. Students understood the differences between appeals and complaints, extenuation and where to get support. Information was available in a number of sources, hand books, online, on notice boards and via tutors.

2.47 In relation to academic appeals the review team looked at the Academic Appeal Form, available to students from the intranet. There is a separate document on academic appeals for exams and an Academic Appeals Guidance Leaflet from the awarding body with clear and detailed information and timeframes. The University's Academic Appeals Regulation Document of 2010, revised in 2014, is specifically for collaborative provision.

2.48 In investigating how the College approaches complaints the team looked at *Tell Us How We Are Doing* and found this to be an example of the College's informal approach to complaints which is able to resolve issues before matters escalate. In exploring the open door approach of the College in dealing with complaints the team were satisfied with the responses of students and the extensive record of complaints kept in the complaints log. The team tested to see if information was made available to students by reviewing documentation such as the Academic Appeals Guidance Leaflet and the letter sent to students informing them of their grades. The College also provides information to students during inductions and by way of information displayed within the learning environment. The team found evidence of openness by staff at every level to engage students in opportunities to discuss issues, an approach which reduces the potential for student complaints. The College reviews its complaints by way of an extensive log that accurately records details of all complaints and actions that arise from it.

2.49 All policies in the College have a review schedule and other sources for review include the awarding body, annual reporting and reports of external examiners. The Pearson Quality Review report, for instance, suggested the appeals policy should be made more user-friendly and the subsequent response demonstrates the College addressed this issue.

The review team looked at minutes from the Board of External Examiners where there was discussion about students' ability to appeal the Board's decision. The review team also saw information relating to the appeals process in the letter to students informing of their grade which was designed to enable students to make an informed decision about their next steps.

2.50 The team found the College systems around appeals to be systems to be clear, fair and easy to understand. It is also able to take a proactive approach in engaging students in resolving issues informally and without delay. The review team found that the openness of staff at every level enables early resolution of problems that reduces the potential for student complaints and appeals and this is **good practice**. Students and staff are well aware of the procedures in place and there is a clear understanding of the different processes of the College and its degree-awarding body and awarding organisation. Therefore, the review team concludes the Expectation of *Chapter B9* of the Quality Code is met and the 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

2.51 The College maintains an outward facing perspective, engaged with a diversity of external organisations including employers. The College has sought to link all programmes to professional bodies, for example Engineering courses now accredited by the IMechE and IET. The BA (Hons) Textiles for Fashion is currently applying for accreditation with the Fashion Council. Construction programmes are accredited with the Construction Industry Training Board. The College's links with employers and the workplace have been important in determining and effecting this policy.

2.52 The College encourages employers to engage in educational processes and work closely with the institution's students, providing sponsorship and placements linked to specific programmes. The review team found that this was well understood throughout the organisation. The review team explored the relationship with employers associated with the College, hearing of the approval of the apprenticeship frameworks delivered; and accreditation at the right academic level for engineering technician status, in parallel with academic qualifications. It was established by the review team that employers do not directly develop academic content, rather employers support the work in achieving accreditation, facilitation of industry links, and the aim is to support careers events in future. The review team heard that employers do not play a direct part in assessment processes, though review meetings with students ensure an awareness of the mechanisms, and there is opportunity to offer areas of potential enhancement.

2.53 The review team tested the relationship between the College and its validating and awarding partners, as discussed in section two. As the College described its works with them, the review team found a reliance on the Pearson and University of Winchester mechanisms, in which standards and processes are necessarily met, but the depth of discussion can be mixed. The review team explored the implications for governance and quality assurance of introducing another university into the process and found that this is being considered at a senior management level and there is work already being undertaken reconfiguring awards to suit the new mechanisms.

2.54 The review team concludes that the College is able to manage the learning opportunities of its students effectively in all learning settings, and that Expectation B10 is met with a low degree of risk.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B11: Research Degrees*

Findings

2.55 The College does not offer research degrees.

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.56 In reaching its positive judgement about the quality of student learning the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook relating to Part B of the Quality Code.

2.57 The team found that all 11 expectations were met but in two areas there was a moderate degree of risk. One recommendation relates to a degree of ambiguity in published documentation on the admissions process, and the other relates to the need, as higher education provision expands, to engage students in the representative and committee structures so as to make them partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience.

2.58 In this section the review team identified two areas of good practice which make a contribution to the students' learning experience, one in relation to the College's receptiveness to the needs of their learning environment and the other to the openness of staff at every level which enables the early resolution of any problems.

2.59 The review team concludes, therefore, that the quality of the student learning opportunities 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 provides and publishes information about its missions values and strategy in the form of the current strategic plan for 2013-2016 and the Higher Education Strategy which are readily available for prospective and for current students, its financial statement is also published online.

3.2 The review team looked at the website, prospectuses and information available on courses and enrolment. The review team read general, programme and module information for current students on the virtual learning environment and looked at the information available for students on completion of their studies, meeting with marketing staff, senior staff and students.

3.3 On the website there is a wide range of information for perspective students, including videos which are detailed and contain wide-ranging information. The prospectus is available online and in print form. Current students have access to the intranet and additional online resources such as the virtual learning environment. Information is also available through videos.

3.4 On testing the evidence the review team found that the information available contains course information, fees, entry requirements and information on course content for all three years. For prospective students there is also information on progression routes and links to the Unistats website. Although the review team found some inconsistencies and ambiguities around information about interviews, in meetings held with students the review team were able to conclude that they are generally confident in the accuracy and availability of the information available. The College makes publically available their strategy for improving and delivering teaching, a Teaching Learning and Assessment Strategy, intended for students and staff, which the review team found to be comprehensive and wide-ranging.

3.5 In further testing the accuracy of the information for prospective and current students and for other stakeholders, the review team considered the College's Marketing and Communications Strategy. The review team met with staff responsible for maintaining and producing documents and information and with students and learned there is senior management responsibility for ensuring the accuracy of the information produced. This is supported by others with responsibility for updating and monitoring the information, and in particular through monitoring by the marketing team.

3.6 The review team concludes that the College produces information for its intended audiences about the higher education it offers that is fit-for-purpose, accessible and trustworthy. The information available for prospective and current students is detailed and contains enough information for informed choices. There is a high level of confidence in the accuracy of the information available. The Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

3.7 In reaching its positive judgement about the information provided by College about its provision, the review team matched its findings against the Expectation in Part C of the Quality Code.

3.8 The review team found that the College provides a range of information for prospective students to help them select their programmes and understand the academic environment. The review team found some risk relating to the information on selection procedures but this was perceived to be a low risk in relation to what was generally clear, accurate and helpful information. The information for current students and for those responsible for quality assurance was found to fully meet the Expectation.

3.9 Therefore the review team concludes that the quality of information provided by Basingstoke College of Technology meets the Expectation in this area and presents low risk.

4 Judgement: The enhancement of student learning opportunities

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

Findings

4.1 The enhancement of student learning opportunities was not immediately evident from the College's own articulation in the self-evaluation document, nor from discussions with staff. There were no clearly articulated examples of enhancement, other than ones relating directly or indirectly to employability.

4.2 However, the review team found evidence of enhancement in the way staff reflected periodically on programme performance and the student experience through mechanisms such as the Course Review and Evaluation, the Quality Improvement Plan and the open door policy. There was evidence, too, of enhancement brought about through reflection at the point of course validation and revalidation and the deliberate attempt to align all courses with employment and professional accreditation.

4.3 The review team also heard from students and employers of consistent improvements made to the learning experience through targeted investment in resources and through curriculum and assessment changes. It was also persuaded that the College was aware of the opportunities afforded by its relationship with partners, especially with the University of Winchester, to drive wider improvements in its higher education provision and that it understood the need to scale up its currently effective programme level quality assurance and improvement activities and was making a strategic staff appointment to support this.

4.4 The review team concludes that there are further opportunities for the College to define and describe its enhancement approach to further develop and formalise opportunities to incorporate and integrate enhancement into the reporting and monitoring cycle of the College. The review team **recommends** that the College should formalise its approach to enhancement to support the growth in its higher education provision, by September 2015. Nevertheless, the review team found the level of risk to be only moderate and confirms that the Expectation on enhancement in Annex 2 of the handbook is met.

Expectation: Met

Level of risk: Moderate

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

4.5 In its positive judgement on enhancement the review team looked for evidence that Basingstoke College of Technology takes deliberate steps at a strategic level to improve the quality of student learning.

4.6 The evidence proved difficult to establish since the higher education provision is small and discrete, so that action taken at institutional level is directed at, and impinges chiefly on, its further education provision, while improvement of its higher education provision is necessarily undertaken largely (and effectively) at programme level.

4.7 Nonetheless, the review team did determine that curricula and learning resources had been substantially improved as a result of the wider College approach and that the College was aware of the potential problems of expanding its higher education portfolio, took quality assurance and enhancement seriously, and valued the provision sufficiently to invest new management resource into the project.

4.8 Consequently, despite a moderate risk, the review team finds that the College meets the Expectation on enhancement.

5 Commentary on the Theme: Student Employability

Findings

5.1 Throughout the visit the review team explored the theme of Student Employability at the College, which was identified as central to the College's vision. It is evident that the expectation of all students is progression or employability and their engagement with studies is expected in order to achieve this.

5.2 The review team found that the accreditation of higher education courses is a central strategy for the College and the re-validation addressed employability. The review team heard that investment in the teaching environment, both for engineering and fashion, had come about both from employer suggestion and student request which has resulted in significant improvement in the past five years. Part-time engineering students who work in the industry were particularly able to identify the topicality of their education and the quality of experience, which supports the College's approach.

5.3 Students are engaged in the output of employability through the Course Review and Evaluation process. The review team found that students are aware of Course Review and Evaluation, though not necessarily of the feedback mechanisms concerning annual planning thereafter. There was, however, a very strong agreement among the student community of the focus on employability and future employment opportunities, which included the applicability of the curriculum, additional experiences including guest speakers, and support from the College in preparing for work.

5.4 The enrichment week includes visiting lectures from industry, and multiple visits to employer locations to get a grasp of what might be expected from the workplace. This was identified by the students as a positive contribution to their understanding of expectation beyond their studies.

5.5 Employment attributes are embedded in the curriculum of programmes as a requirement of recent revalidation. Staff recognised the importance of graduate attributes and the significance of supporting students in relevant placements, and the contribution of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies and employers to enriching the student experience.

5.6 The review team concludes that the approach the College is adopting to enhance the student experience of employability fulfils their intentions.

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 27-29 of the [Higher Education Review 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.

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* (FQHEIS).

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.

Public information

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

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.

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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