



Higher Education Review of Bracknell and Wokingham College

February 2015

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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 Bracknell and Wokingham College. The review took place from 24 to 26 February 2015 and was conducted by a team of two reviewers, as follows:

- Mrs Polly Skinner
- Mr Matthew Kitching (student reviewer).

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provided by Bracknell and Wokingham College 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 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 Bracknell and Wokingham College 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/the-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 Bracknell and Wokingham College

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at Bracknell and Wokingham College.

- 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 Bracknell and Wokingham College.

- The comprehensive and supportive student induction process (Expectation B2).
- The effective use of reflective practice in supporting student employability that enhances their programmes and develops students as professional practitioners (Expectation B3).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations** to Bracknell and Wokingham College.

By September 2015:

- ensure that actions taken in response to student feedback are communicated in a consistent manner to all students (Expectation B5)
- develop a consistent and systematic approach to action planning in the programme monitoring and review process (Expectation B8)
- comprehensively document the procedures for handling different types of complaint (Expectations B9 and C).

Theme: Student Employability

Contained within its Strategic Plan 2014-17, the College aims to bring 'the world in the classroom' which in part will support the development of students' employability skills. Both higher education programmes are highly vocational with students enrolled in the College as existing practitioners. The mentors and teaching staff are also qualified in the relevant industries thereby offering students sector knowledge in developing their professional skills. The College has ongoing relationships with employers and in particular Local Enterprise Partnerships which are viewed as essential in its growth strategy of higher education programmes.

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

About Bracknell and Wokingham College

Bracknell and Wokingham College (the College) is a further education college based in Berkshire specialising in 16+ learning for school leavers, adults, apprentices and employers. The College operates out of 20 local centres within the Bracknell Forest and Wokingham District areas with the modern headquarters based in Bracknell.

The College's mission is to 'enable all learners to achieve their full potential' and since 2012 the College's vision has been encapsulated by the V5I (the College's vision statements characterising how it will achieve its goals), stating the College to be vibrant, inspirational, impassioned, innovative, and in the heart of the community and business.

Since the last QAA review in 2010 the College has appointed a new Principal and implemented a new management structure which includes the appointment of two new Vice-Principals. A new Chair of Governors has been appointed as well as a new Governor.

The College delivers two higher education programmes: Foundation Degree in Children's Development and Learning on behalf of the University of Reading and Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) delivered on behalf of the University of Greenwich. The current total number of students on both courses is around 60. The College has had a relationship with the University of Reading since 2004 and with the University of Greenwich since 2005. The College has been successfully reviewed by both Universities since the last QAA review in 2010.

Major challenges the College has faced include the growth of higher education which includes higher apprenticeships, the development of the new higher education curriculum, prioritising Local Enterprise Projects, accommodation, financial stability and the development of the ILT (Information and Learning Technologies) strategy.

The College has addressed and responded to most of the good practice and recommendations from the last QAA review. Developments have included the purchase of a plagiarism-detection system, the inclusion of distance learners at induction and the comprehensive use of the Universities' virtual learning environments (VLE). The College has strengthened its already positive relationships with both Universities and has developed further mechanisms of communication and support for its higher education mentors.

Explanation of the findings about Bracknell and Wokingham College

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

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 considers that its qualifications meet the requirements of the *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ). The Universities retain overall responsibility for ensuring that qualifications are placed at the appropriate level of the FHEQ, that programme learning outcomes exist and that these are mapped onto the relevant qualification descriptor. They also ensure that programmes conform to titling conventions. This is considered as part of the awarding bodies' approval, monitoring and review processes.

1.2 The review team found that, subject to effectively executing the requirements placed upon them, the ownership by the awarding bodies of the development and approval process combined with detailed programme learning outcomes, accurate titling conventions and established review processes would enable this Expectation to be met.

1.3 The review team tested this Expectation by viewing the University of Reading Credit and Qualifications Framework and guidelines relating to the design of undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes. The review team also viewed the University of Greenwich Quality Assurance Handbook and Academic Regulations for Taught Awards. In addition,

the review team met staff and students, viewed approval documentation and templates for and outputs from annual monitoring processes, and scrutinised external examiner reports.

1.4 The policies set by the awarding bodies are clear in relation to this Expectation and are well understood by College staff; this is confirmed by external examiners. The FHEQ has been considered in the development of both programmes. In addition, the *Foundation Degree Qualification Statement* was appropriately considered during programme development. External examiner reports also comment favourably on the College's contribution to the management of academic standards and reflect on the fact that while Subject Benchmark Statements do not formally apply to the programme, cognisance appears to have been taken of related Subject Benchmark Statements. The review team was given further assurance of this by College and University staff who confirmed that a formal mapping exercise had taken place.

1.5 Staff demonstrate a solid understanding of the levels involved when teaching on higher education programmes. Programme learning outcomes are in place, appropriate and communicated to students via their programme handbooks, which are developed by the awarding bodies in line with their regulations. Students report that they find the increased demands of the levels challenging but appropriate and believe they are well supported to make the transition between these levels.

1.6 Owing to the clear role of the awarding bodies, the College's solid understanding of its responsibilities as set out in University regulations, and the thorough execution of these responsibilities through approval processes, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the level of associated 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 programmes delivered by the College are ultimately those of their degree-awarding bodies delivered through franchise arrangements. The principal frameworks and regulations governing the award of credit and qualifications therefore belong to the Universities, though they are supplemented by College processes and oversight. The University of Reading articulates these arrangements through its Quality Management and Enhancement Processes and the University of Greenwich details its arrangements within the University Academic Regulations for Taught Awards and Academic Regulations for Research Degrees.

1.8 The College's higher education provision is located within the Department of Professional and Business Learning Programmes in the Faculty of Adult and Professional. Higher education provision is overseen by the College's Higher Education Academic Board with discussion at programme level taking place in student-staff liaison committees. In addition to this, a Children's and Young People's Workforce Steering Group is in place for the Foundation Degree Children's Development and Learning and senior College staff maintain a strategic dialogue with their University counterparts.

1.9 The documented governance arrangements for programmes delivered at the College are comprehensive, overseen by the awarding bodies and well understood by College staff. This would enable this Expectation to be met if exercised accurately.

1.10 The review team tested this Expectation by meeting students, College staff and awarding body representatives. The review team also viewed policy documentation relating to the management of academic standards, organisational charts and the minutes of committees responsible for managing academic standards.

1.11 The policy framework constructed by the awarding bodies is detailed. The University of Reading's Quality Management and Enhancement Processes outline the four areas of responsibility in relation to quality assurance: module, programme, Faculty and University, providing a clear framework for staff working within the regulations. Similarly the University of Greenwich's Academic Regulations for Taught Awards detail key elements of the institution's quality assurance processes and also provide information relating to credit, structure and the expected learning environment on academic programmes. Due to the small nature of higher education provision within the College, it does not have its own quality procedures but rather uses existing awarding body documentation. Staff are familiar with these requirements and were able to provide examples to the review team of how they work within the regulations.

1.12 The size of higher education provision at the College enables it to manage its programmes effectively as part of its overall committee structure. The College has successfully strengthened its oversight through the creation of its dedicated Higher Education Academic Board which enables closer scrutiny. The University of Reading's Board of Studies and University of Greenwich's network of colleges provide robust forums for discussing issues and good practice related to the programmes.

1.13 A Higher Education Link Governor is in place who acts as a source of advice and support for senior managers with responsibility for higher education. The Link Governor also undertakes observations, contributes to discussions about potential strategic partnerships relating to higher education and has been involved in the development of the VLE, again from a strategic perspective. The review team found that this role further contributed to the effectiveness of the College's governance arrangements.

1.14 Due to the clear and comprehensive policies of the awarding bodies, the College's effective management structure and understanding among staff of awarding body requirements, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the level of associated 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

1.15 The College's awarding bodies are ultimately responsible for constructing and maintaining definitive information relating to the two programmes on offer. The University of Reading has a policy relating to the creation of programme specifications which are published annually on the University website and complemented by module descriptions. This information is also provided to students in their programme and module handbooks. The University of Greenwich has a requirement for programme-definitive documents to be produced which encompasses the programme specification for a given award. Similarly this information is accessible to students via the website and forms part of the Trainee Handbook but not the Bracknell and Wokingham PGCE Handbook.

1.16 Definitive programme information is available to students in hard copy and online. This information is comprehensive and processes exist for it to be systematically reviewed and updated. Therefore, arrangements were sufficient to enable this Expectation to be met.

1.17 The review team tested this Expectation by meeting with staff and students. They also viewed programme specifications, awarding body regulations and programme and module handbooks.

1.18 Programme specifications produced by both Universities contain all the salient information and are readily accessible to students, with both awarding bodies providing online versions. Clear processes exist for these to be reviewed and College staff, as delivery partners, are able to provide feedback that informs this review. Recent changes to the PGCE have led to students studying on multiple programme specifications. The review team found that the College had managed this well and that staff, students and workplace mentors had all been made aware of the changes and how they impact student learning opportunities.

1.19 Students informed the review team that they were able to access definitive information relating to their programme online and in hard copy. Students also reported that the specification is discussed at interview and enables them to develop a thorough understanding of their programme of study and what is expected of them.

1.20 The College uses clear awarding body processes and provides detailed and accurate programme documentation. Students are satisfied with the information they receive and therefore the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the level of associated 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 The College has agreed to use the degree-awarding bodies' policies and procedures to deliver their relevant higher education programmes. Both Universities have established programme approval procedures to ensure that programmes meet or exceed the UK threshold academic standards.

1.22 The College also has an internal process for establishing a consistent College-wide system for all new programme approvals and continuing courses as described and illustrated in the College procedures. The College's Higher Education Academic Board approves all proposals for new academic higher education programmes and course discontinuation. The setting of the level of the awards is set by the degree-awarding bodies. This is in accord with the reliance that the College has in the academic frameworks, FHEQ levels and regulations set and established by the Universities. The College's confidence in using the Universities' systems and processes ensures its compliance with UK threshold standards and enables this Expectation to be met in theory.

1.23 The review team tested the Expectation by meeting College staff and representatives from the Universities. They also viewed the Universities' academic regulations, handbooks, policies and College meeting minutes.

1.24 The quality assurance arrangements for University of Reading programmes are set out in the University Guide to Policies and Procedures in Teaching and Learning, published on the University website. The University retains discretion in respect of all matters of academic standards, assessments and awards and quality assurance.

1.25 Following the authorisation by the Academic Planning Committee, the University of Greenwich approval process includes the identification of a link tutor for the College partner as well as clear and full information about the learning, teaching, resource strategies and needs.

1.26 Through the effective and close working relationships between College staff and its University counterparts, any changes to programme approval processes or module content are communicated in an apparently workable way to ensure that academic standards continue to be met and maintained.

1.27 Within the agreements with the degree-awarding bodies, the College demonstrates consistency and understanding of the academic frameworks, regulations and the collaborative partnership arrangements. Therefore, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and that 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

1.28 Assessment of the University of Reading Foundation Degree is in accordance with the University's Code of Practice on Assessment of Taught Programmes. The Foundation Degree is assessed by coursework as set out in the relevant module descriptors. External examiners are required to verify the standard and consistency of the marking of assessments that directly contribute to an award.

1.29 The students on the University of Reading programme achieve the award by meeting those academic standards as set out in the University Ordinances and the Programme Specification.

1.30 The University of Reading requires that assessment regimes for programmes and modules be fit for purpose, which includes promoting effective student learning and enabling students to show the extent to which they have met the intended learning outcomes of the modules or programmes. The University's procedures for programme approval include consideration of the assessment regime's effectiveness in measuring student attainment of the intended learning outcomes and in promoting student learning.

1.31 The University of Greenwich Assessment Feedback Policy states that guiding principles for marking must be given by the FHEQ-level descriptors, the learning outcomes for the programme, the course and the assessment, and the University's generic marking criteria within the Academic Regulations for Taught Awards. The programme may be customised to meet local requirements but must meet University of Greenwich learning outcomes for the parent programme. The review team finds that the programme specifications present well-defined content, and detail the learning outcomes for each module as well as formative, summative and assessment tasks that account for all delivery modes. They also indicate the programme structure and submission terms.

1.32 For the University of Greenwich collaborative provision, the host faculty identifies a link tutor who will take day-to-day responsibility for the programmes. Link tutors attend programme committees, organise standardisation and moderation of assessment and liaise with the external examiner.

1.33 The Universities' assessment guidance and requirements coupled with the College's own assessment procedures and moderation mechanisms enable this Expectation to be met in theory.

1.34 The review team tested the Expectation by viewing programme specifications, the newly updated PGCE & Professional Certificate in Education (PCE) Teacher Education Programmes for Lifelong Learning and assessment submission terms, external examiner reports and regulations. The review team also met staff and students from the College.

1.35 The University of Greenwich Assessment and Feedback Policy states that assessment must be designed to promote effective learning, with students provided with assessment criteria for individual assessment tasks, as well as an explanation of how the tasks relate to learning outcomes and how marks will be allocated. All programmes are required to provide opportunities for all the intended learning outcomes for the course to be achieved and assessed. Across the programme, the range and types of assessment must measure student achievement of programme-level learning outcomes in all cases. Students that the review team met agreed that a diverse range of assessment opportunities enable them to achieve the learning outcomes.

1.36 All University of Greenwich assessments are subject to scrutiny and are made available to external examiners as required by the University's Academic Regulations for Taught Awards, with students receiving a single agreed mark following such scrutiny.

1.37 Assessment, verification and exams procedures are included within the College's procedures manual and state that internal sampling and monitoring reinforce external moderation to ensure consistency of marking.

1.38 Both Universities have appropriate measures in place to ensure that the awards are awarded only when the achievement of the learning/programme outcomes has been assessed as meeting the UK threshold standards and those regulations stated by them as the degree-awarding bodies. The achievement of academic standards and thoroughness of assessment are confirmed in reports by both University external examiners. Both programmes use a second marking system. Another partner college also second marks as a cross-check system.

1.39 The review team met with students about the level of accessibility to and achievement of these specifications. Students confirmed that effective explanations are given to them, verbally and in the programme handbooks, about how the learning outcomes are to be achieved and assessed.

1.40 As well as consistently following the awarding bodies' guidelines for assessment, the College has clear and well-understood assessment procedures, allowing students the opportunity to demonstrate achievement of the learning opportunities. Therefore, the 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

Findings

1.41 The College and the degree-awarding bodies carry out systematic annual monitoring and review of programmes. The Universities also conduct periodic reviews on the programmes delivered by the College. The College also carries out twice-yearly formal and developmental internal inspections of its provision using external reference points.

1.42 The Universities provide explicit monitoring and review regulations to which the College is expected to adhere. Compliance is checked by formal reporting procedures to the appropriate awarding body faculties and committees. These procedures vary slightly between the two degree-awarding bodies but achieve similar compliance.

1.43 The University of Reading Periodic Review is undertaken within a six-year cycle with the last review completed in 2011. The University of Greenwich periodic review cycle is every five years with the last review completed in 2010.

1.44 The establishment and adherence to the regular and periodic monitoring and review of the awarding bodies as well as the College's own internal monitoring mechanisms enable the Expectation to be met in theory.

1.45 To test the Expectation, the review team considered the various review processes and viewed annual partner sub-reports, annual reports and periodic reviews relating to the University of Reading and annual monitoring reports and Collaborative Partner visit reports relating to the University of Greenwich. The team also met College senior and academic staff and representatives from the awarding bodies.

1.46 All University of Reading Partner Sub-Reports feed into the overall Annual Programme reports. These reports enable the Boards of Study, with responsibility for collaborative programmes, to identify and consider any significant changes or issues identified during the past academic year in relation to programme monitoring and review; securing academic standards; staff appointment and development; and comparability of the student experience. The Annual Report summarises the overall collaborative College partnership's external examiner responses and does not identify specific College commentary.

1.47 The review of franchised University of Greenwich provision focuses on the partner and its capacity for delivering the programme, rather than on the programme itself, which is scrutinised through review of the parent programme. Following a planned visit to the College the link tutors are required to complete a Collaborative Partner visit report and a short annual report for their Faculty Academic Quality and Standards Committee.

1.48 External examiners affirm that all programmes are maintaining standards.

1.49 The degree-awarding bodies confirm that the monitoring and review of programmes addresses the achievement of UK threshold academic standards and whether the academic standards required by each degree-awarding body are being maintained.

1.50 The College complies with and understands the degree-awarding bodies' mechanisms for regular programme monitoring and periodic review which are used to secure and maintain academic 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 (A3.4): 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

1.51 There are a number of ways that the degree-awarding bodies guarantee that external and independent expertise is used beneficially at key stages of setting and maintaining academic standards.

1.52 Both awarding bodies use external and independent expertise in the development of programme design and in the monitoring of existing programmes. This is done by the appointment of external representation on the University of Greenwich's programme approval meetings and at its Progress and Awards Board which ensures standards are maintained through assessment. The University of Reading ensures the appropriate use of externality through its Board of Examiners.

1.53 Both Universities appoint external examiners to their programmes to monitor and report on the standards of the programmes. The College is required to use and respond to these reports for further development and to ensure that the College maintains those standards.

1.54 Additionally, the College is required by the University of Reading to ensure that staff-student liaison committees include consideration of assessment matters in their business at least once in their annual cycle, and that they have the opportunity to consider relevant external examiners' reports.

1.55 The review team considered a variety of committee meeting minutes, the last two years' annual review reports, the periodic review in 2011, the annual partner sub-reports and programme self-assessment reports. The review team also met University and College staff.

1.56 There are opportunities at the University of Reading cross-partnership management meetings to consider the staff-student liaison committee minutes, and to compare and contrast external examiner reports and the outcomes of double or second marking. The Foundation Degree Steering Group membership comprises University, higher education-led partner colleges, the Local Authority and employers and is largely an operational forum. The group's remit is to ensure that local training needs, knowledge and sector requirements are met within the programmes. The group reports on issues of standards, employers' concerns and admissions. The Steering Group Terms of Reference were agreed in 2014, when the group's focus on the strategic overarching view from the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) and the workforce agenda were reinforced.

1.57 The University of Greenwich Initial Teacher Training course meetings are attended by the network link tutor whose knowledge about the College partner clusters informs the maintenance and consistency of academic standards. The central purpose of the link tutors is to organise the standardisation and moderation of assessment, and liaise with external examiners. Link tutors carry out joint assessments of practical teaching with the external examiner. Additionally, College tutors undergo joint College teaching observations with

mentors and the programme leader engages in the University of Greenwich's peer observation process.

1.58 Teaching on the teacher education programme is shared with the University's link tutor across the two-year programme. The benefits of this are two-fold: trainees gain an insight of feedback from a University tutor on the full-time students, and teaching from an experienced external lecturer from a University perspective. The University of Greenwich mentor coordinator makes an effective contribution to the level of externality, independent critical appraisal and guidance on whether academic standards are appropriately set and maintained for the programme.

1.59 Appropriate use of externality in ensuring academic standards in the development and monitoring of programmes is the responsibility of the awarding bodies, but the College demonstrates that it makes use of this external expertise and the consideration of external examiners' reports. 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

1.60 In reaching its judgement about the maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

1.61 All of the applicable Expectations in this area have been met and risk is judged low in each case, with no recommendations arising.

1.62 The review team concludes that the maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of the College's degree-awarding bodies **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 and approval of programmes.

Quality Code, Chapter B1: Programme Design and Approval

Findings

2.1 The degree-awarding bodies have an established qualifications framework for the design, development and approval of the programmes delivered at the College.

2.2 In setting academic standards, support for proposers of new programmes is provided by the University of Reading in guidelines on the design of undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes, which references the University's academic frameworks and regulations. All programmes are reported through the Quality Management and Enhancement processes at the University and the external examiner is consulted regarding programme design. This ensures the consistent and systematic application of the process as well as clear lines of responsibility.

2.3 The development and approval of the University of Reading Foundation Degree in Childhood Development and Learning was conducted in 2004 in collaboration with the College and two other partner Colleges. The provision was periodically reviewed in January 2011 and, as a result of this, the College was commended to the University Teaching and Learning Board, for a further six years of delivery. The review evidenced good practice in the clear commitment of the College senior and academic staff team to the success of the programme. Academic staff confirmed their contribution to the ongoing development of the programme making small or minor changes in accordance with any Children's and Young People's Workforce sector developments and that the Boards of Study are essentially involved in the minor change process.

2.4 In maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities for programmes, the University of Reading's programme Steering Group acts as an advisory body. The student cohort (2009-11) and employers were consulted regarding proposed programme changes. Students were consulted regarding modules and content. Senior staff confirmed that employers are extremely effective within the Steering Group, enabling industry standards to be maintained.

2.5 The design and approval mechanisms established by the awarding bodies and followed by the College enable this Expectation to be met in theory.

2.6 The review team tested the Expectation by reviewing the University of Reading Periodic Review report, the initial Foundation Degree approval and revalidation, and the University of Greenwich Report of Programme Approval and Review. The review team also met College staff, awarding body representatives and students.

2.7 The process for the initial approval of delivery by the College of the franchised programmes validated by the University of Greenwich followed a panel renewal process in September 2010. This process is based on a standards review document that considers external examiner and programme monitoring reports as well as academic teaching staff's curricula vitae. Students and staff were part of the discussions with the written notes reporting evaluative and positive responses.

2.8 In preparation for the delivery of the new Level 5/6 Diploma in Education & Training, the College fully participated in the design and approval of the new programmes at initial development stage to final approval, attending network conferences and consultation events at the University of Greenwich, including participating in the Learning and Skills Improvement Service consultation meetings during new qualification development.

2.9 In March 2013, the University and the College formed a working group to ensure the delivery of the new programmes following the Learning and Skills Improvement Service directives and to consider alternative models of programme design. The College started to deliver the new Level 5/6 Diploma in Education & Training In September 2014. College staff confirmed that they found that being involved in the consultation process helped them tailor the curriculum to be much more relevant to the teaching staff and for particular student groups.

2.10 The quality of learning opportunities of Initial Teacher Training programmes is enhanced by the contribution made by student representatives who are invited to attend course review meetings. Student attendance is aimed at ensuring their views and those from former students' surveys and module evaluations are recorded and used to inform future programme development and changes to improve programme design. The intention is to reflect learner diversity while maintaining academic and professional standards set by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service. The Education and Training Foundation ensures curriculum content meets the requirements of the FHEQ.

2.11 The College has effectively adopted the awarding bodies' processes for the design and approval of programmes. College staff and students are encouraged to engage with the Universities to inform and develop existing courses and are consulted on programme changes. 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*

Findings

2.12 Admissions criteria are set during validation, contained in programme specifications and available on the College and awarding body websites. Applications for the Foundation Degree Children's Development and Learning are primarily received directly by the College, though they can also be submitted via the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). Applicants for the PGCE are required to complete the University of Greenwich's online application process. The College scrutinises applications and conduct interviews. Guidance for College staff on recruitment, including interviews and making offers, is detailed in the Provider's Handbook. The College follows the processes of its awarding bodies in relation to admissions, including for accreditation of prior learning.

2.13 The review team found that the awarding bodies' detailed policies relating to admissions, well-publicised entry criteria, transparent interview process and supportive information provided for students would enable this Expectation to be met.

2.14 The review team tested this Expectation by viewing the degree-awarding body admissions policies, websites and application forms. The review team also met with students and staff and examined a wider range of information provided to prospective students.

2.15 The review team was able to confirm that the Universities' policies relating to admissions are suitably detailed. Information is hosted on the Universities' websites and entry criteria are readily accessible. The joint approach to admissions and induction taken by the Universities and the College strengthens the process as it enables students to gain a fuller understanding of what it means to study for the awarding body's degree within a further education college. Several College staff are involved in the admissions process including programme leaders and the Application Administrator who directly oversees the application process from a College perspective. Review of admissions is conducted in part through the College annual monitoring process but also through joint College and University meetings.

2.16 Students confirmed that they found the admission and induction process to be detailed, tailored and highly supportive. Students are provided with timely information, including reading lists in advance, which enables them to immerse themselves in the subject matter from an early stage. The interview process is seen as an extension of the induction system as it answers questions students have about the programme of study. Programme staff meet some applicants in their work setting to discuss the programme and students feel valued by the admissions process. Students progressing internally from College programmes informed the review team that they were given a clear understanding of the differences in studying at a higher level. Students entering directly onto year two of a programme considered that the induction enabled them to take up their studies in a seamless fashion. University staff play an active part in induction events, attending sessions at the College but also leading activities on University campuses. Students are also provided with an induction to the University library. The review team therefore considers as **good practice** the comprehensive and supportive student induction process.

2.17 The College has established comprehensive admissions policies and effective monitoring processes. There is also a high degree of student satisfaction with the

admissions 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 (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

2.18 The University of Reading has a Teaching and Learning Strategy in place which applies to the College as a collaborative partner. Teaching and learning on the University of Greenwich programme falls under the auspices of the College's Teaching, Learning and Higher Education Strategy which was introduced for the 2014-15 academic year. Staff are appointed following an interview process and all new employees receive an induction. They may also be required to undertake higher-level qualifications as a condition of their appointment. Staff are subject to a range of observations, a number of which are developmental and others which lead to formal grading and are undertaken in line with the requirements of the Universities.

2.19 Students receive information about the learning environment, teaching methods and assessment mechanisms through their programme and module handbooks. Induction also contains information about what students can expect to receive from the Universities. Students are exposed to the scholarly activity of staff from the awarding bodies, for instance through the Research Day hosted by the University of Reading.

2.20 Recruitment processes identify the qualifications of new staff and any developmental requirements. The College supports new staff to attain higher-level qualifications. Staff development is supported in a variety of ways and is considered by the College to be generous. A programme of staff development is in place across the College and quality assurance mechanisms are used to identify new focuses for the programme. Staff from the College are also able to access training sessions delivered by the Universities.

2.21 The expectations placed upon students are communicated to them through a Statement of Learner Responsibilities for the University of Reading and a Code of Professional Conduct for students on the PGCE.

2.22 The strategic arrangements for teaching and learning, robust recruitment and induction processes for staff, varied approach to staff development, wide-ranging teaching methods and numerous monitoring and observation processes are sufficient to enable this Expectation to be met.

2.23 The review team tested this Expectation by meeting staff and students, and viewing the Universities' teaching and learning strategies and policies for observation. The review team also considered the College's teaching, learning and higher education strategy, self-assessment reports, observation records and cluster reports. In addition, the review team viewed lesson plans, meeting minutes and records of staff development.

2.24 The review team found that a wide range of teaching methods are employed on the programmes including lectures, seminars, individual and group presentations and reflective exercises. Students are positive about the broad range and stimulating nature of classes which are especially important due to the study pattern for students which can mean learning is taking place at the end of a long working day. Students are also positive about the central role of reflection in the curriculum. Staff help students develop as reflective practitioners and

students cited several examples of this improving their practice and heralded it as a key strength of the programme. The review team considers as **good practice** the effective use of reflective practice in supporting student employability that enhances their programmes and develops students as professional practitioners.

2.25 The comprehensive observation processes are well understood by staff and are effective. Formal observation follows the criteria set by the Universities and is in line with the expectations of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies. Simulated inspection weeks occur twice a year and enable staff to experience observation, leading to grading, in a formal setting. Staff members who are assigned to the inspection team are experienced higher education teaching practitioners. Outcomes from formal observation are addressed through employee development and the College's Teaching Learning and Assessment Manager ensures any themes inform the wider programme of staff development.

2.26 The College's higher education Link Governor and Principal also engage in observations which are designed to be developmental and morale-boosting for employees. The College has an established system of peer triangles in place where colleagues observe one another for development purposes. The triangles may be formed of staff from across the College, including from within the same department. Staff found these a valuable mechanism for improving their teaching.

2.27 In addition to observation, multiple and effective mechanisms exist to monitor and review the quality of teaching practice. The University of Reading subjects modules to an annual review and evaluation which involves staff from several of the partner colleges in the University's network and the Director of Foundation Degrees. Students are able to provide feedback to the Board of Studies through their elected student representative. Both programmes are required to complete annual monitoring reports which include student feedback and the University of Greenwich link tutor meets with students separately to gather their views on teaching and learning.

2.28 The review team found that the clear strategic approach for teaching and learning is being effectively implemented by College staff. The College's approach to staff development is multifaceted and valued by staff. Students are universally positive about the range of teaching methods employed and the central role of reflective practice in the curriculum. The College's observation process is also thorough and explicitly linked to staff development. Therefore, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the level of associated 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

2.29 The College and its awarding bodies have a close partnership approach to developing the academic, personal and professional potential of students. The awarding bodies determine resource levels at the point of programme approval and these are routinely monitored to ensure they remain fit for purpose. The University of Reading achieves this via its management meeting and through the Annual Programme Report process which feeds into a wider Partner Programme sub-report. The University of Greenwich Cluster Standardisation meetings enable the College and awarding body to assure themselves of the availability and sufficiency of resources. Link tutor arrangements and external examiners on both programmes also take resources into account while monitoring the programme.

2.30 The College use the student interview process to identify any additional student needs. Programme teams are alert to the fact that some students are returning to education after considerable absences and support is tailored to account for this. English and maths support is available as is disability support and access to an education psychologist when necessary. Students may also avail themselves of counselling and financial support.

2.31 The College has its own study support facility. However, students on both programmes can also access academic support and advice through their respective awarding bodies. A tutorial system is in place across both programmes as are arrangements for workplace mentoring. In addition, the University of Reading Disability Advisory Service is available for students studying at the College. Information and materials are also provided in a range of formats should students require this service.

2.32 The review team tested this Expectation by viewing student handbooks, induction resources and policies relating to support arrangements and resources. The review team also viewed awarding body monitoring reports and committee minutes and met students, College staff and representatives from the awarding bodies.

2.33 Collaborative induction programmes help to inform students about what resources can be accessed via the College and similarly through their awarding bodies. Students on the Foundation Degree in Children's Development attend an induction event at the University of Reading which is delivered by University staff and representatives from the Students' Union. This event details student entitlement to learning resources. Prior to this, during the application process, students are directed to suitable periodicals which will enable them to keep up to date with developments in the sector. University of Greenwich students are provided with a similar induction delivered by the network link tutor which outlines resource arrangements and student support entitlement.

2.34 The College's tutorial system is implemented on a needs basis rather than conforming to pre-determined frequencies. Students confirmed that they were able to request additional tutorial support at any stage. They also find sessions to be useful and developmental. Additional pastoral support is available in the form of regular meetings between students and their workplace mentors and a record of these interventions is held on the VLE.

2.35 Learning resources are reviewed annually and the College responds to the Universities where they direct the institution to invest in a greater level of resource. Students

are also able to comment on the sufficiency and quality of resources through the course review process. Recent feedback has reflected a desire among students for a greater volume of e-books. This particular demand is due to the part-time nature of the programme and the ease with which students can access the library. The review team was informed that discussions are currently taking place to assess the feasibility of making an increased investment.

2.36 The University of Reading and the College work together to promote the benefits of progression to the University and as such students are invited to a session at the University library which supports students with research skills for their major project. Students on the first year of the programme are also invited to attend a Research Day at the University. Students are also invited to attend termly study days at the University of Greenwich and students in the second year of the Foundation Degree informed the review team that these events had been particularly useful. However, first-year students on the Foundation Degree were unaware of such an opportunity, though they did agree it would be beneficial.

2.37 The College has its own Information and Learning Technology Strategy which includes a strong commitment to the institution securing its own VLE. Currently, students access programme information and resources on the Universities' VLEs and view this as useful and appropriate.

2.38 The College demonstrated well-resourced programmes, student-led tutorial process, a structured approach to mentoring interventions, robust monitoring arrangements and involvement of the awarding bodies in teaching and learning. Therefore, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the level of associated 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

2.39 The College and the degree-awarding bodies have a variety of ways in which they collect student opinion and involve students in assuring and enhancing their learning experiences.

2.40 The University of Reading students can engage with quality assurance and enhancement processes through regularly held staff-student liaison committees. The meetings provide a formal channel for students to meet with staff to discuss what is working well in the delivery of their programme and areas for development such as equipment, library provision and the consideration of a quiet Higher Education study area. Boards of Study follow these meetings where students' input is considered and resulting actions are fed back.

2.41 University of Greenwich students contribute through elected representatives who attend College Programme Committees and the College is responsible for feeding back follow-up action to students. Students are also invited to Course and Self-Assessment Meetings. Their contributions are included in the Programme Monitoring report.

2.42 All students complete module evaluations, take part in regular College surveys with emerging action plans and have access to a tutorial system which engages their views with the development of the programme.

2.43 The established systems for student representation at formal College and awarding body forums, the collating and analysis of student feedback through various mechanisms and an effective tutorial system enable this Expectation to be met.

2.44 The review team tested the Expectation by examining a selection of the staff-student liaison committee minutes and those of the Boards of Study, noting the students' contribution to the process and that relevant comments about their programme and learning experience are recorded and actioned. Minutes from these meetings are posted on the VLE. This was further tested and confirmed during meetings with staff and students.

2.45 Students confirmed that programme-level tutors are readily available for dialogue between the allocated tutorial time and that opportunities for students' input are presented by module evaluations occurring informally midway through and at the end of each module. There was evidence that changes to assessment had been made as a direct response to student feedback. The University of Reading's NSS action plan also recorded positive improvements in programme organisation and management, learning resources, and personal development with 100 per cent for overall satisfaction. University of Greenwich students confirmed that they have had several surveys so far this year but that there had been no feedback about the outcomes, and that feedback by link tutors is erratic.

2.46 Student representation works in different ways for the two programmes. University of Reading students have an elected representative while all students within the cohort studying the University of Greenwich award, who have no elected representative, are invited to attend Course Review and Self-Assessment meetings. Students reported that this was an effective vehicle to raise concerns coupled with survey feedback.

2.47 The review team found a recent student survey confirmed that most students consider that the College listens to the student voice; very few disagreed. All second-year

students agreed that they are involved in the quality assurance of their programmes and that student representation is effective.

2.48 However, in response to surveys and review meetings, weakness exists in communicating outcomes of actions taken from their engagement to the entire student cohort, identifying the need for the College to strengthen its feedback mechanism. The review team **recommends** that the College ensure that actions taken in response to student feedback are communicated in a consistent manner to all students.

2.49 The College has effective mechanisms in place for gathering and evaluating student feedback to contribute to the development of the programmes. Adequate student representation systems exist, although the methods of feeding back to students were inconsistent. However, the 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

2.50 The College conducts its assessment processes in line with those set out in the Memoranda of Agreement between the degree-awarding bodies and the College, which detail the requirements and obligations for equitable assessment of both the University and the College. This is supported by University guidance on the entire assessment process and assessment policies and reinforced by the external examiners. Defaulting to the degree-awarding bodies' requirements ensures fairness and consistency of assessment.

2.51 Comprehensive degree-awarding body assessment guides are provided to all students including information in relation to penalties for late submission, examination arrangements, extenuating circumstances, academic misconduct, feedback to students, marking and progression, classification of degrees, publications of results, re-examination and how to make an appeal. The College use proprietary online software to ensure any unacceptable academic practice is identified. Both awarding body assessment policies and procedures are clearly defined and reiterated in the Programme and Module handbooks. Standards are set by relevant government policies for initial teacher training and the Children's Workforce Development sector lead. These policies and practices enable the Expectation to be met in theory.

2.52 University of Greenwich Academic Regulations for Taught Awards include the principles and practice governing assessment and the role of the Subject Assessment Panels and final examination boards, known as the Progression Award Boards. The review team found that the process of the Progression Award Board is straightforward and outcomes are appropriately recorded.

2.53 The role of the University of Greenwich link tutor is key to the programme. They are responsible for organising standardisation and moderation of assessment, liaising with the external examiner and gathering student views.

2.54 This academic year the College have been delivering against entirely new specifications for the Teacher Education Programmes for Lifelong Learning. The new specifications clearly show the learning outcomes and associated assessment tasks with the required word length. College staff confirmed that the impact has been extremely beneficial in meeting the wider needs of current practical teacher training practice.

2.55 Students confirmed that they are mostly satisfied with the timing, design and variety of assessments. Tutors are very supportive and clear about assessment and feedback, and students understand what learning outcomes are and how to achieve them. Students agreed that the workload is heavy but manageable and feedback is not always timely. However, tutors are readily available for informal discussions and emails are often used to communicate with them. The first-year students say that feedback is always quick on the first draft assessment but they are not given a date for the assessments to be returned to them, instead often finding their results initially on the University of Greenwich portal. Students corroborated that feedback is constructive and developmental.

2.56 The teacher education programmes present ample opportunities for students to discuss with mentors or tutors in a way that promotes a shared understanding of the reasoning that informs assessment judgements. The review team considered course meeting minutes, link tutor, mentor and mentee feedback and discussions. The review team also noted the internal and cluster standardisation process and moderation contributing to the assurance that the award standards are maintained for the entire programme delivery.

2.57 All modules on the University of Reading programme incorporate a work-based element in the form of a Guided Professional Discussion which is assessed by the workplace mentor with one discussion per year moderated by the link tutor. The students confirmed that the Guided Professional Discussion provides a useful technique in promoting a shared understanding of academic assessment judgements and stimulating reflective practice. Students confirmed that it was especially important for them to carefully select their mentors as it is vital that mentors are supportive. They felt that some mentors only just comply with the basic requirements of their role. The best mentors are those who enable the students to engage in reflective practice.

2.58 Foundation Degree students confirmed assessment criteria are very clear and all assessments are outlined at the start of the year. Feedback is consistent and very constructive and dates for feedback are given in the programme handbooks. The students agreed that they are clear about what they need to do to achieve at a given level and are positive about mentors in the workplace, stating that they help with assessment decisions. Students agreed that there is sufficient opportunity to engage in dialogue about any assessment decisions made about them, assuredly mentioning that tutors respond quickly, especially fitting in second-year students as soon as they can.

2.59 The University of Reading external examiner report endorses the successful delivery of the aims and learning outcomes as stipulated in the programme specification.

2.60 Students confirmed using the appropriate university policy and procedure for the accreditation of prior learning. Staff confirmed that the process and the transition onto the programme were smooth. The direct entry student on year two of the teacher education programme had experience of working within the sector and was not considered to be disadvantaged.

2.61 Both in theory and in practice the methods of assessment adopted by the programmes work within the awarding body regulations, operating equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment, including the recognition of prior experiential learning. 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 (B7): Higher education providers make scrupulous use of external examiners.

Quality Code, Chapter B7: External Examining

Findings

2.62 Both degree-awarding bodies have very well defined codes of practice for external examining that include detailed responsibilities for the appointment and management of the process and the overall administration of external examining. Academic Regulations for Taught Awards set out the process of scrutiny by the external examiners that supports the assurance of academic standards. External examiners are suitably qualified and experienced in the subject specialism to which the appointment relates and independent of the degree-awarding bodies.

2.63 The University of Greenwich external examiner attends Subject Assessment Panels and the Progress and Awards Board, which decide the final outcome of the results of the assessment for each student. The College has representation at the final exam board which the external examiner attends.

2.64 The University of Reading external examiner reports confirm that the University's regulations and procedures are adhered to. External examiners are required to attend the Programme Examiners' Meeting which considers the results of students. A College representative, a College observer and the external examiner attend the Boards of Examiners that meet to recommend results for submission to the examiners' meeting of the University of Reading Institute of Education. External examiners are required by the University of Reading Code of Practice to scrutinise and approve papers to ensure the reliability and validity of the assessment and test the stated aims and learning outcomes of modules and courses. External examiners are also invited to make evaluative comment on the design of the programme, its objectives and its assessment regime, and to contribute to the review and enhancement of the programme.

2.65 The College higher education Academic Board is responsible for disseminating all external examiner reports. Reports are discussed during College programme team meetings and Boards of Study and reviewed at the annual programme committees and course review meetings. Responses to recommendations are recorded by the University of Reading, forming part of the Annual Programme Monitoring Report. The recommendations and responses are also reported to the Board of Studies.

2.66 Student access to external examiners' reports varies. University of Greenwich reports are emailed to all students. University of Reading external examiners' reports are accessible online, through the VLE. However, apart from the student representative, most students were less clear about their understanding of the external examiner's role and annual reports. College staff confirmed that external examiner report extracts are shared with student representatives at the University of Reading staff-student liaison committee, although minutes did not substantiate that. However, the minutes did show that the process is evaluative and reviews what has gone well and what areas need to be improved.

2.67 The College produced a response following the external examiners' report for the Foundation Degree in July 2014. Responses aligned with external examiner recommendations, noting what work was required. Statements from the external examiners' report are usefully integrated into the University of Reading Annual Partner Programme Sub-report 2012/13, as are the responses. However, in both of these cases, the College responses failed to provide a detailed timescale for completion, by whom the response should be made, and where the responsibility lies for taking action.

2.68 University of Greenwich external examiners' reports are fully reported in the Annual Programme Monitoring and Review.

2.69 The University of Greenwich external examiners' report is included in the programme Self-Assessment Report and, although there are few recommendations that require action, the current action planning is adequate for the existing amount of programmes.

2.70 The College follows the arrangements for external examining as set out by its degree-awarding bodies and makes use of external examining input in the review and monitoring of programmes. Students have access to reports although understanding of the external examiner remit is varied. Therefore, the review team concludes that the College meets the Expectation and that 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

2.71 Both degree-awarding bodies stipulate their intention to undertake annual and periodic reviews within the Memorandum of Agreement with the College. The degree-awarding bodies provide guidance determining the annual reporting procedures and requirements for the completion of annual reporting through either the University of Greenwich Annual Programme Monitoring Reports or University of Reading Partner Programme sub-reports. The College responds with evaluative reviews containing areas of strengths and areas for improvement, responses and reviews of the programme modules. The College programme reviews inform the awarding body processes.

2.72 At the end of each academic year the College requires each programme to hold a Course Review and Self-Assessment meeting, chaired by a member of the senior management team. Student representatives present their reports and programme managers, tutors' responses to student feedback, results of the learner survey and module evaluations, as well as data statistics, external examiners' reports and all appropriate operational aspects of the delivery and management of the programmes.

2.73 The University of Greenwich assumes responsibility for informing students about the actions taken in response to any feedback provided and periodically reviewing student feedback and student representation arrangements. Students have the opportunity to feed back during an annual University of Greenwich link tutor visit to the College. The annual Course Review and Self-Assessment meeting report provides the background narrative for the completion of the annual, programme-level, higher education self-assessment reports and overall higher education Self-Assessment Report.

2.74 In testing the Expectation, the review team considered the outcomes of the national student survey and internal student survey. The most recent programme review and self-assessment meeting reports, review of the Quality Improvement Plan and module evaluations were also reviewed. The results from the internal survey are discussed at Programme Committee and Course Review meetings, and used to inform programme improvement. University of Greenwich students confirmed that representation at the Course Review and Self-Assessment meetings is dependent on availability.

2.75 The College's higher education programme and the combined overall higher education Self-Assessment reports identify key strengths of the programmes and, in the Quality Improvement Plan, some areas for improvement. The process is appropriate and provides the opportunity for the programme to be systematically and consistently monitored and reviewed. However, the level of detail about action planning is varied. Responsibility for completion and impact criteria and measures showing the success of the improvements are inconsistently reported. The quality and fullness of responses in the Quality Improvement Plan to recommendations for both degree-awarding body programmes are variable. Therefore, the review team **recommends** that the College develop a consistent and systematic approach to action planning in the programme monitoring and review process.

2.76 The College has adopted mechanisms by the awarding bodies as well as developing its own internal monitoring processes to periodically review the programmes. It has effectively implemented these processes but the level of detail and fullness of action

planning are varied and not appropriately reported. Therefore, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met but the level of risk is moderate as the action planning procedures are adequate but have some shortcomings in 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

2.77 The College Agreement with the University of Reading states that the College shall comply with implementing the University's Student Complaints Regulations & Procedures, in conjunction with, and as required by, the University. The University of Reading is responsible for academic appeals and formal complaints of students on the Foundation Degree.

2.78 The agreement with the University of Greenwich states that their appeals regulations shall apply in respect of academic procedures. These procedures for academic appeals and student complaints about the quality of learning opportunities are clearly stated in the Network Colleges Trainee Handbook, University of Greenwich's Academic Regulations for Taught Awards, Academic Quality Unit updated September 2014 and Formal Complaints regulations and Procedures.

2.79 University of Reading students are directed to the examination policy web link for appeals' policies and regulations, and the web link to the internal students' rules and regulations as regards complaints.

2.80 Students are informed about the appeals and complaints process by the College at induction, attended by the degree-awarding body, at the start of each academic year. The process is further discussed when setting and reviewing unit assessment criteria and during one-to-one tutorials before the assignment submission deadlines set by the University of Greenwich. The College also directs students in the PGCE/PCE Handbook to the formal College complaints procedure whereas 'direct entry' students are directed to the University student centre for the procedures.

2.81 The College confirms that appeals and complaints, wherever possible, are dealt with informally by programme leaders. Students confirmed that they would always go to tutors with any appeal or complaint as their first port of call. They also agreed that they find the open-door policy at the College and the approachability of College staff helpful, and they understand differences between the degree-awarding body and the College processes in relation to complaints and appeals. University of Greenwich students can use either the online process or go directly to the degree-awarding body administrator with an appeal or complaint. Conversely, there have been no appeals or complaints on either programme before or since the last QAA review.

2.82 The review team tested the Expectation by taking into consideration the University of Reading Provider's Handbook, the University of Greenwich Network Colleges Trainee Handbook, Academic Regulations for Taught Awards, Academic Quality Unit and Formal Complaints Regulations and Procedures.

2.83 College procedures and the College Student Services Manager are in place to deal with College complaints. In the event of an extreme case, the College process facilitates escalation through a clear line of responsibility from student services, proceeding to the first line manager, followed by the Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality to intervention by the Principal who will notify the Board of Governors.

2.84 The College confirmed that complaints more commonly arise in programme review meetings or student surveys, and are generally around College facilities. A timely response is most usually made to these complaints.

2.85 University of Reading students are advised, if they have a complaint, to use the College and University handbooks unless the complaint is serious, when they should go to the Head of Department for Professional & Business Learning Programmes. This process appears to be somewhat indistinct for the students.

2.86 There are various ways in which students can make complaints about their programmes, resources and facilities. Both students and staff understood the mechanisms in place to make complaints but these and the responsibilities relating to complaints were not clearly set out in College documentation. Therefore, the review team **recommends** that the College comprehensively document the procedures for handling different types of complaint.

2.87 The College has procedures in place for handling academic appeals that are fair, accessible and timely, providing students with sufficient opportunity to access and facilitate their needs. There are a number of opportunities for complaints about the quality of learning opportunities to be addressed through procedures, but access to these is insufficiently defined and therefore less clear for students. Therefore, the team concludes that the Expectation is met but the associated level of risk is moderate due to a weakness in the documentation of defined processes which could have an impact if the number and seriousness of complaints increase.

Expectation: Met

Level of risk: Moderate

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

2.88 The College's higher education provision is confined to two programmes which consequently limits the number of collaborative partners involved in the delivery of learning opportunities. The programmes are highly vocational with students already employed upon admission. Teaching draws heavily on students' experience in the workplace. The University of Reading operates a link tutor system and students on the Foundation Degree are assigned a workplace mentor. Similarly, the University of Greenwich operates a workplace mentor scheme. In both instances mentors are provided with support materials, including a handbook, and the University of Greenwich also operates a training scheme, circulates newsletters and maintains a database of mentors. The University of Reading mentor induction occurs at the College and mentors attend with their mentees.

2.89 The review team tested this Expectation by meeting students, workplace mentors and staff. The review team also studied programme handbooks, mentor handbooks and training materials for mentors.

2.90 The clear information provided to students and workplace mentors, thorough approach to briefing and structured record system for meetings together with the feedback opportunities for mentors, mentor involvement in observation and visits by programme staff to the students' workplace enable this Expectation to be met in theory.

2.91 A log of meetings between University of Reading students and their mentors is captured on the VLE which acts as a useful point of reference. A standard pro forma is in place for these meetings which helps to structure the interaction between students and mentors.

2.92 Mentors are qualified teachers, experts in their discipline or operating at management level. A thorough process of induction is in place for mentors and includes a face-to-face briefing conducted at the College. Documentation relating to the role and remit of workplace mentors is extensive and detailed. Handbooks provide a clear breakdown of responsibilities and the support available to mentors.

2.93 Mentors play an active role in student assessment. Students on the Foundation Degree in Children's Development and Learning undertake a Guided Professional Discussion which is assessed by mentors in partnership with programme staff who observe the process. Detailed information about the role of mentors and the overall process is included in the Mentor Handbook. The review team found that students and mentors agreed that the role of mentors in assessment was working effectively and aiding the development of students.

2.94 Effective communication mechanisms are in place between the College, the awarding bodies and mentors. In addition to the induction programme, mentors receive email updates, newsletters, and visits by programme staff and University link tutors. Mentors reported to the review team that they are also provided with the opportunity to feed back on students, the mentor system and the programme in general to the College and awarding bodies. The review team determined that changes to programmes were communicated

effectively to mentors with an example cited on the PGCE where mentors were informed about the changing specification and the impact it would have for their role supporting student learning opportunities.

2.95 Monitoring systems are in operation to evaluate the workplace mentoring system. University link tutors meet with mentors and students evaluate their mentors. The College and University staff meet annually to review the handbook, other information and the mentoring system in general. Ofsted feedback to the University of Greenwich has commented favourably on the mentoring system. The University of Greenwich link tutor has also commented on how well the College monitors the quality and suitability of mentors.

2.96 The College's workplace mentoring system includes the comprehensive induction of mentors, a structured format for mentor interventions and College oversight surrounding the involvement of mentors in assessment. Clear monitoring systems of the mentoring scheme have been established combined with positive feedback received through the mentors. Therefore, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the level of associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B11: Research Degrees*

Findings

2.97 The College does not offer research degrees.

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.98 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.

2.99 Of the 10 applicable Expectations, all are met. Of those met Expectations, eight have associated low levels of risk. Expectations B8 and B9 have moderate levels of risk.

2.100 There are two features of good practice in this area: the comprehensive and supportive student induction process (Expectation B2), and the effective use of reflective practice in supporting student employability that enhances their programmes and develops students as professional practitioners (Expectation B3).

2.101 There are three recommendations in this area: to ensure that actions taken in response to student feedback are communicated in a consistent manner to all students (Expectation B5), to develop a consistent and systematic approach to action planning in the programme monitoring and review process (Expectation B8), and to comprehensively document the procedures for handling different types of complaint (Expectation B9). The team found that there was evidence that the College had adequate and effective systems in place to manage its current higher education provision and quality of learning opportunities, but some of the current systems and practices are of an informal or less consistent nature and would benefit from a more considered and structured approach. None of the actions recommended will require or result in major change to structures, processes or practices.

2.102 The review team concludes that 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 has a Marketing Strategy and it is the College's responsibility to ensure that information it produces is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. Higher education programmes are situated in the In Business Prospectus, although a bespoke higher education publication is soon to be produced in the adult/work employer section of the website. The Marketing Plan is the primary vehicle used by the College to ensure that the Strategy is implemented. Information is subject to review via the Marketing Self-Assessment Review and Quality Improvement Plan.

3.2 Responsibility for the approval of programme-related information rests with the Head of Department for Business and Professional Learning. This information is constructed by programme teams in the first instance and is also subject to ultimate approval by the awarding bodies. The accuracy of information is considered through the annual monitoring process as well.

3.3 The College's curriculum and administration teams oversee the College's management information system which enables the institution to communicate any in-year changes immediately rather than waiting for the next prospectus. Committees, such as the University of Reading Board of Studies, are also used to relay information to students.

3.4 Students have access to awarding body websites and VLE together with a wide range of handbooks at College, programme and module level. Students have access to programme specifications produced by the awarding bodies in hard copy and online.

3.5 Information is considered as part of programme approval. The Universities are responsible for producing a significant amount of the information for students. Furthermore, a clear College process exists for monitoring information and the College has its own Marketing Strategy and Plan. Consequently, the arrangements in place are sufficient to enable this Expectation to be met.

3.6 The review team tested this Expectation by viewing the College website, prospectus and handbooks. The review team also read the College's Marketing Strategy, Marketing Plan, Self-Assessment Review and Quality Improvement Plan. In addition the review team met students and staff, including those with responsibility for the management of information.

3.7 The review team found that arrangements for the oversight of information are effective in ensuring that it remains fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. The roles of the programme team, head of department and Marketing Department are well delineated and understood by staff. The role of the Universities is also central to the development and maintenance of information and resources such as programme handbooks are produced directly by the Universities and adopted by the College.

3.8 Students confirmed that they received all the information they require and were especially complimentary about pre-arrival information. Students reported that they had access to programme specifications, programme learning outcomes and external examiner

reports. The review team found that the VLE was well maintained and provides students with a comprehensive range of learning materials and information on support.

3.9 The review team did find that while students were satisfied that they knew how to progress a complaint, information provided by the College did not clearly articulate the routes complaints ought to take and the role of the Universities, or provide fulsome information on timescales, support and other aspects of the complaints process. This is addressed in greater detail under Expectation B9.

3.10 Workplace mentors receive clear and detailed information about their role in supporting student learning opportunities. This is provided in the form of a Mentor Handbook and supplemented by an initial briefing session at the College and a mentor newsletter.

3.11 The College is in the process of developing a new brand for its higher education programmes which will be introduced in 2015-16. The College is also in the process of improving its website and new functionality will allow applicants to talk to admissions staff via a 'live chat' function. The site has recently been upgraded to be responsive to mobile and tablet users and fully accessible to those with disabilities.

3.12 The review team concluded that owing to the clear procedures for the construction and approval of information, oversight provided by the awarding bodies and high satisfaction among students and other stakeholders, the Expectation is met and the level of associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

3.13 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 The College approaches student-centred enhancement through strategic leadership led by the Corporation, Principal and the senior management team and underpinned by the development and adoption of various policies. The Corporation Board includes an identified higher education Link Governor and the College has strong community, employer and Local Enterprise Partnership links which all contribute to the enhancement of learner opportunities.

4.2 The College has introduced an enhancement policy and student enhancement action plan, which aims to formally monitor enhancement initiatives. The close external links with the community, employers and Local Enterprise Partnerships enable enhancement within the higher education programmes in being responsive to local employability and fulfilling the key performance indicators and strategic themes as described in the College Strategic Plan.

4.3 Enhancement is driven by senior management, including the Governors, and by programme teams. The Vice Principal for Curriculum and Quality is responsible for systematically monitoring, developing and recording the Red, Amber and Green-rated enhancement action plans from which enhancement initiatives are instigated and monitored by the Academic Board following feedback from evaluations, discussions with students, external examiner input, and discussions with senior and academic staff.

4.4 The College's strategic approach to enhancement directed from the top level and including deliberate enhancement policies and the use of the quality cycle processes to inform and develop enhancement initiatives enables the Expectation to be met in theory.

4.5 The review team considered the processes and policies in place which inform the enhancement of student learning opportunities and spoke to senior College staff and the higher education Link Governor.

4.6 The higher education Link Governor observes and reports on behalf of the governing body the delivery of higher education programmes through lesson observation and an ongoing informal dialogue with the Head of Faculty, programme teams and students. Any issues arising from the visits are reported to the Quality and Curriculum committee, chaired by another Governor. This practice can contribute to the quality enhancement of the student learning experience.

4.7 Enhancement initiatives developed since the last QAA review in 2010 include the mentor scheme and a review of the teaching policy to define and clarify the different requirements of higher education teaching in the further education environment. Academic staff have engaged with the Higher Education Academy (HEA), enabling them to define scholarly activity in further education-based higher education and for some staff to gain HEA Fellowship status.

4.8 The student submission reveals that all second-year students agreed that there is an ethos of continual improvement in the College. Extracts from module reviews are included in Course Review and Self-Evaluations and Programme Monitoring and Committee meetings with clear records of notice being taken of the student comments. Students confirmed the valued opportunities in both programmes for developing their learning

experiences, finding that guest speakers provide useful insight into their subject area and that specialist speakers are very useful in year one, as are visits to different settings throughout the programmes.

4.9 The College offers differentiated approaches to staff development, formally by the degree-awarding bodies and informally by the College mostly as a result of a direct response to identified support needs emerging from lesson observations. College staff confirmed that they use both approaches to enhance their practice. Senior staff confirmed that, as part of the enhanced lesson observation process, they had added an additional focus to consider the evidence of wider reading and research to ensure that teaching is scholarship-informed for higher education programmes.

4.10 Senior staff were positive about the informal way in which enhancement is spontaneously promoted and responded to. This is often as a result of actions that emerge from learning and teaching recommendations, and student contributions in tutorials as part of the day-to-day operation of the higher education programmes. This is not a planned, coalesced or monitored process but, nonetheless, the result of these academic interventions is that the College's intention to enhance the student experience is upheld.

4.11 The College's approach to enhancement is led by senior College staff. It is informed by quality assurance processes and formal and informal contributions are made by staff through teaching and learning practices, and by students through evaluations and feedback. Initiatives derived from these processes and structures are monitored through the enhancement action plans. Therefore, the review team finds that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

4.12 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 were no recommendations, affirmations or features of good practice. The review team therefore concludes that the enhancement of student learning opportunities at the College **meets** UK expectations.

5 Commentary on the Theme: Student Employability

Findings

5.1 The College has a history of providing higher education in the region and currently delivers a number of non-prescribed higher education programmes in addition to those under the scope of this review. It is in this context that the College has a vision, contained within its Strategic Plan 2014-17, to deliver employability skills and in part achieve this by bringing 'the world in the classroom'.

5.2 The College views the strategy of the Local Enterprise Partnership as crucial in supporting the sustainability of its higher education offering in that it focuses on developing both jobs and housing in the Thames Valley region with around 17,000 jobs and 10,000 new homes to be built by 2021. This will mean a growth in the demand for early years' provision and schools in the locality, therefore providing future employment for graduates.

5.3 Both programmes under review are highly vocational with students admitted onto the part-time courses as existing practitioners. The programmes are developed to professional, statutory and regulatory body standards, ensuring that graduates are equipped with the necessary skills and attributes to develop further in the workplace, of which reflection is viewed as a particular strength. Identified as good practice under Expectation B3, the heavy emphasis on reflection in the curriculum and use of real examples to inform teaching practice and students' learning are highly valued by staff and students. The review team was provided with case studies in the documentation, in the form of testimonials, which demonstrate the benefit of this reflection in the context of career development. The review team also met with students who confirmed that reflective practice is highly beneficial. Some students reported that they were not initially advocates of the approach but staff demonstrated the benefit and it now underpins their daily approach to work.

5.4 Work-based learning is integral to the Foundation Degree, and the Guided Professional Discussion forms the substantive interaction between the mentor and the student. This equates to 10 per cent of the overall mark and is graded by the mentor. The student is also assessed in the workplace according to professional criteria. The Foundation Degree acts as a reliable progression route onto the BA Children's Development and Learning programme, with progression statistics ranging from 79 to 88 per cent between 2010 and 2014.

5.5 Particular modules, such as Professionalism in the Children's Workforce are also seen by the College as central to helping students develop as rounded practitioners. So too is the use of guest lectures, which students comment upon favourably. The opportunity to hear from experienced practitioners as well as students from other cohorts and graduates of the programme has enabled students to gain a fuller understanding of their industry and potential career paths.

5.6 Students returning to education after a period of absence commented that they were apprehensive about higher education, their suitability and whether they possessed the requisite skills. It was felt that induction and transition arrangements support student employability in that they help students to recognise the transferable skills they acquire through their programmes. The range of teaching methods employed stretches students and enables them to develop presentation and business skills, confidence and organisational skills.

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 29 to 32 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* (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.

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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