Higher Education Review (Plus) of CCP Graduate School Ltd

April 2014

Contents

About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review (Plus) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at CCP Graduate School Ltd. The review took place from 28 to 30 April 2014 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Dr Clive Marsland
- Ms Sally Powell
- Mr Martynas Kubertavicius (student reviewer).

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

In Higher Education Review (Plus) the QAA review team:

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

In Higher Education Review (Plus) there is also a check on the provider's financial sustainability, management and governance (FSMG). This check has the aim of giving students reasonable confidence that they should not be at risk of being unable to complete their course as a result of financial failure of their education provider.

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 CCP Graduate School Ltd 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 2013-14 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 (Plus)[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.

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[1] The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at: www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code.
[2] Higher Education Review themes:
www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=106.
[3] QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us.
[4] Higher Education Review (Plus): www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/Educational-Oversight-.aspx.

Amended judgement June 2015

Introduction

In April 2014, CCP Graduate School Ltd underwent a Higher Education Review (Plus), which resulted in judgements that the maintenance of the threshold academic standards of awards **meets** UK expectations; the quality of student learning opportunities **requires improvement** to meet UK expectations; the quality of the information produced about its provision **meets** UK expectations; and that the enhancement of student learning opportunities **requires improvement** to meet UK expectations.

In accordance with paragraph 98 of the [Higher Education Review (Plus) Handbook for 2014-15](#) the School was required to produce an action plan responding to the recommendations and affirmations and giving any plans to capitalise on the identified good practice. The action plan was submitted on 22 December 2014 and the review manager liaised with the School about the HER Plus partial re-review plan.

The partial re-review visit took place on 6 and 7 May 2015 by a new team of two reviewers. The review was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the above handbook and the further guidance *Higher Education Review (Plus): What Happens After an Unsatisfactory Judgement?* (2014). The review team looked at each of the recommendations relating to the negative judgements identified in the original review and addressed in the School's action plan as well as areas of good practice.

QAA Board decision and amended judgements

The review team concluded that the School had made sufficient progress to recommend that the judgements be amended. The QAA Board accepted the team's recommendation and the judgements are now formally amended. The School's judgements are now as follows.

- The maintenance of the threshold 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.

Findings from the partial re-review process

The team found that the School had made progress against the recommendations as follows.

Recommendation - Expectations A6 and B6
The School has reviewed and updated its process for capturing and monitoring information about student assessments and achievement using a learner management database for this purpose. This has addressed concerns about the security of assessment tracking.

Recommendation - Expectations B1, B6, B7 and B8
The School has undertaken a full review and revision of its policies. As a result of the review the School has produced a comprehensive document that has clear version control. Staff and students have been made aware of the revised policies and procedures.

Recommendation - Expectations B2, B3 and B4
The system for evaluating and monitoring key management information has now been revised. A new Director of Quality role and a new committee, the Quality Team, have been

created to oversee this system. The formation of the team, and new role of Director of Quality demonstrates a clear commitment to a systematic approach to evaluation and monitoring of key management information, although there is still some work to be done in streamlining the process.

Recommendation - Expectation B7
External examiner reports and related action plans are now shared with students via the virtual learning environment (VLE) and through consideration at the Student-Staff Liaison Committee.

Recommendation - Expectation B8
A new Annual Programme Monitoring and Review Policy and Procedure has been implemented. This has clear lines of responsibility and timelines. Consultation with staff and students is now more embedded in the procedure. Actions from annual programme monitoring are followed through and monitored effectively.

Recommendation - Enhancement
The School has developed an Enhancement Strategy, which is entirely new. The Strategy emphasises a student-centric approach to enhancement with student representatives participating in all appropriate meetings of the School's management committees. Staff showed a good understanding of a deliberative approach to enhancement and a number of examples were given of enhancement strategies that had become initiatives which have been achieved.

The team found that the School had made progress against good practice as follows.

Good practice - Expectations A6 and B6
As in the original review, students were very aware of what was expected of them in terms of assessments and praised the teaching staff for the level of individual support. The VLE and Student Handbook continue to serve as the main sources of assessment information, policies and procedures. The School has further extended the good practice by encouraging both students in their teaching practice and the trainers themselves to watch video clips of teaching practice and to evaluate it.

Key findings

QAA's judgements about CCP Graduate School Ltd

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at CCP Graduate School Ltd.

- The maintenance of the threshold academic standards of awards **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of student learning opportunities **requires improvement to meet** UK expectations.
- The quality of the information produced about its provision **meets** UK expectations.
- The enhancement of student learning opportunities **requires improvement to meet** UK expectations.

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following features of **good practice** at CCP Graduate School Ltd.

- The comprehensiveness and usefulness to students of the assessment practices of teaching staff (Expectations A6, B6).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations** to CCP Graduate School Ltd.

By October 2014:

- establish a more secure system for capturing and monitoring information about student achievement (Expectations A6, B6)
- undertake a review of all its policies and procedures, as well as the information given to staff and students about these policies and procedures, with a view to ensuring that all this information is fit-for-purpose and trustworthy (Expectations B1, B6, B7, B8)
- systematically evaluate key management information and monitor any follow-up actions arising from that evaluation (Expectations B2, B3, B4)
- make external examiner reports available to students (Expectation B7)
- implement a more rigorous and evaluative annual monitoring procedure (Expectation B8)
- develop a deliberate, School-level approach to enhancing the quality of students' learning opportunities (Enhancement).

Theme: Student Employability

The School's only programme at higher level - the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector - is a full teaching qualification geared specifically towards enabling students to gain employment or develop their employment opportunities. For its part, the School supports students' employability in several ways, including by maintaining a database of placement providers for the mandatory teaching practice, conducting a systematic programme of placement support and monitoring, and employing a Career Coach.

Financial sustainability, management and governance

There were no material issues identified at CCP Graduate School during the financial sustainability, management and governance check.

Further explanation of the key findings can be found in the Higher Education Review (Plus) handbook available on the QAA website.

About CCP Graduate School Ltd

CCP Graduate School Ltd (previously known as Certified Computing Personnel) (the School) is a private educational institution founded in 1994 and headquartered in Neasden, North London.

The School offers a range of programmes in business, creative media and information technology at various levels. At higher level, the School currently offers one programme, the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS), which is awarded by Pearson. The scope of this review is largely confined to that programme, although in some respects the review also considers what the School has done to assure the academic standards and quality of a number of new higher-level programmes in business, tourism and information technology, which are due to begin in September 2014.

The School began providing the DTLLS in January 2012, and has since enrolled 573 students on it. There are four intakes to the programme every year in January, March, June and September. At the time of the review there were 137 students enrolled. The programme is delivered at various sites in North and West London and in Birmingham.

This is the first review of the School by QAA.

Explanation of the findings about CCP Graduate School Ltd

This section explains the review findings in more detail.

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

1 Judgement: Maintenance of the threshold academic standards of awards

Expectation (A1): Each qualification (including those awarded through arrangements with other delivery organisations or support providers) is allocated to the appropriate level in *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ).

Quality Code, *Chapter A1: The national level*

Findings

1.1 The responsibility for allocating the qualification outcomes of the DTTLS to the appropriate level in the FHEQ lies with the awarding organisation, Pearson. The curriculum is also driven by the awarding organisation, with programme delivery, some assessment and internal verification the responsibility of the School.

1.2 The programme specification refers appropriately to the FHEQ, and there is appropriate mapping to learning outcomes in documentation aimed at students.

1.3 An annual review by the awarding organisation and annual monitoring within the School ensure the ongoing appropriateness of the level and content of programmes of study.

1.4 The review team discussed the FHEQ with staff, and examined handbooks, programme specifications and other documentation aimed at students. The team also discussed the availability of FHEQ and subject benchmarking guidance with both senior and teaching staff and was assured that knowledge and dissemination of these were secure and appropriate within the School.

1.5 Overall, while the review team considered that framework and level information could be clearer within School documentation associated with annual monitoring, provision within the School is allocated at the appropriate level. Therefore, this Expectation is met and the associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A2): All higher education programmes of study take account of relevant subject and qualification benchmark statements.

Quality Code, *Chapter A2: The subject and qualification level*

Findings

1.6 The primary responsibility for meeting this Expectation lies with the awarding organisation. Insofar as it has any input, for example in communicating curriculum content to students and updating documentation for curriculum currency, the School manages these processes effectively.

1.7 The School makes appropriate links between subject benchmark statements, learning outcomes and the curriculum requirements of the awarding organisation in strategic and documentation aimed at students, including handbooks, assessment briefs, feedback matrices and feedback sheets. Staff and students are familiar with a learning outcomes-based approach to study anchored in appropriate external benchmarks, and the internal verification process within the School is effective in reinforcing that approach.

1.8 The review team notes that the awarding organisation's approval and review documentation make references to the subject benchmark statements. In addition, reference to the subject benchmark statements is present in programme specifications and review reports. Staff whom the team met were familiar with the relevant benchmarks, and divisions of responsibility for ensuring appropriate external benchmarking are also clear.

1.9 The School delivers appropriate staff development in subject benchmarks and external-level requirements in partnership with its awarding organisation. Staff training meetings also take place during the developmental visits to the School by the awarding organisation.

1.10 Overall, the review team concludes that clear processes, documents and divisions of responsibility are in place to ensure that the management of subject benchmarks and other external requirements in relation to programme level and curriculum content are appropriate. The Expectation is therefore met and the associated risk is deemed to be low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3): Higher education providers make available definitive information on the aims, intended learning outcomes and expected learner achievements for a programme of study.

Quality Code, *Chapter A3: The programme level*

Findings

1.11   The dissemination of definitive programme information about the DTLLS, such as learning outcomes and expected learner achievements, is the responsibility of the School. The School manages that responsibility appropriately, with clear procedures to update learner requirements across the School in essential documentation and in both hard copy and electronically.

1.12   The School gives students detailed information on learning, teaching and assessment methods, module content and learning outcomes, as well as marking criteria, in both hard copy and electronically. The review team read and heard evidence of detailed and student-focused documentary and classroom support for assessment across the School, and considers the comprehensiveness and usefulness to students of the School's assessment practices to be **good practice** (see also Expectations A6 and B6). This is discussed in more detail under Expectation B6.

1.13   There is an appropriate relationship within the School between delivery of core course content and verification/independent assessment by the awarding organisation. The internal verification process is secure.

1.14   The review team concludes that the School's dissemination of documentation associated with design and approval, and its monitoring by the awarding organisation, are secure. The team therefore considers this Expectation to be met, and the associated risk low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A4): Higher education providers have in place effective processes to approve and periodically review the validity and relevance of programmes.

Quality Code, *Chapter A4: Approval and review*

Findings

1.15   The School implements and shares the management of processes for the review of its programmes of study, but design and approval of curriculum are the responsibility of its awarding organisation. This is clearly understood within the School and there are signs of engagement with curriculum development externally, by, for example, senior teaching staff committed to the process of external verifier training, and clear internal verification exercised in accordance with awarding organisation requirements (see also Expectations A2 and A3).

1.16   The School has a formal process of annual monitoring but it is not appropriately specified or rigorously applied. This is discussed in more detail under Expectation B8.

1.17   The School also has a formal periodic review process, which it has not implemented yet owing to the fact that the DTLLS has been running for only two and a half years. Again, this is discussed in more detail under Expectation B8.

1.18   Externality in the School's quality assurance processes is provided by external verifier reports on standards, and annual/developmental reviews by the awarding organisation, which are largely supportive of the School's work.

1.19   The review team concludes that the School complies with awarding organisation programme implementation requirements and that the School has adopted processes to undertake monitoring and review. However, these processes have a number of shortcomings as described under Expectation B8.

1.20   This Expectation is met and the associated risk is moderate owing to the issues described under Expectation B8.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

Expectation (A5): Higher education providers ensure independent and external participation in the management of threshold academic standards.

Quality Code, *Chapter A5: Externality*

Findings

1.21   External verifiers are appointed by the awarding organisation and complement the internal verification process within the School.

1.22   The review team saw and heard evidence of appropriate engagement with the awarding organisation in relation to developmental review, and internal and external verification. The awarding organisation undertakes both an annual review of assessment processes, and an annual review and developmental visit. The School will wish to use its own, strengthened, annual review system and its external reports, for example from Ofsted and its awarding organisation, to enhance quality assurance and action planning across the School.

1.23   Staff are familiar with the processes associated with the strategic and operational use of external expertise, and at least one senior member of staff is in the process of becoming an external verifier, which should benefit the School's own management of standards. Senior management and teaching staff appreciate the importance of external expertise and guidance review to assist in their management of academic standards.

1.24   The review team did not meet any of the current employers who provide placements for the School's students, but there is evidence from students and staff of external employer engagement and advice being considered.

1.25   The School, for the amount of its higher-level provision, and for the level of authority it exercises over that provision, uses appropriate external advice to enhance standards and the quality of students' learning experiences. This Expectation is, therefore, met. In the light of the School's plans to strengthen its employer engagement, the associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A6): Higher education providers ensure the assessment of students is robust, valid and reliable and that the award of qualifications and credit are based on the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

Quality Code, *Chapter A6: Assessment of achievement of learning outcomes*

Findings

1.26   Assessment is a shared responsibility between the School and the awarding organisation, with a system of internal verifiers assuring the standards before external verification. External verification and developmental review has recently noted the comprehensiveness of the School's support for students in assessment.

1.27   Assessment events and processes are managed by the School on behalf of the awarding organisation and are largely appropriate, although data on individual student outcomes should be more firmly version-controlled and quality assured.

1.28   Briefs are prepared largely by the awarding organisation, with some appropriate input from the School, and the School is responsible for the assessment and internal verification of work, as well as for supporting the process of external verification. Both processes are managed appropriately, and the review team notes that the School has taken steps to stage both formative and summative assessments insofar as this is possible within necessary awarding organisation and other restraints, for example the academic calendar.

1.29   The review team heard from students and from teaching staff that the School has a range of strategies in place to support assessment good practice and to maximise student achievement. The team looked at handbooks, virtual assessment support data at a module and programme level, and also held discussions with staff and students on assessment practice. The team further considered assessment briefs and feedback to students on their summative work as well as examining assessment grids and other supporting documentation. The team saw evidence of an appropriately diagnostic approach to students on entry, appropriate formative assessments and accompanying support, and clear feedback and outcomes reporting on summative work. The tutors within the School operate a positive marking philosophy which is in line with awarding organisation and sector expectations and which is appreciated by students both for its rigour and accompanying levels of support.

1.30   The review team additionally noted a sustained and focused concentration on student support surrounding assessment, both in documentary form and in face-to-face tutorials. Students whom the team met praised the School's support for them at especially intense periods of assessment, and documentation surrounding feedback to students, assessment briefs and virtual support for assessment is strong. The review team, therefore, considers that the comprehensiveness and usefulness to students of the School's assessment practices is good practice as recognised under Expectation B6.

1.31   The School uses a spreadsheet to track students' achievement. Where a student successfully retakes a unit they have previously failed, the failing grade is simply overwritten by the new one and the number of attempts is not recorded. The review team regards this system as hindering the effective oversight and systematic consideration of students' performance, since it does not show the number and proportion of students who pass particular units beyond the first attempt. Staff told the team that they had begun upgrading to a more sophisticated system, but that full implementation had been delayed owing to issues with the new software (indeed, the School's self-evaluation document for the review claimed that it had already begun using a new system, which was not true). The team **recommends**,

therefore, that the School establish a more secure system for capturing and monitoring information about student achievement by October 2014.

1.32   The School's Assessment Board is responsible for confirming the marks to be awarded to students for each unit they are studying and for determining the overall results for each student in relation to their progression or award. It is also responsible for making decisions about mitigating circumstances and for considering allegations of academic misconduct. Among the Board's members are the Director of Studies, the programme leader for the DTLLS, the lead internal verifier and the three DTLLS lecturers. All members must be present for the Board to be quorate, according to its terms of reference dated August 2013.

1.33   In its analysis of the minutes of three meetings held since those terms of reference were adopted, the review team noted that the Board had not once enjoyed the attendance of all members and had, therefore, always been inquorate. Furthermore, at two of those meetings only one of the lecturers had attended, depriving the Board of the input of staff who had marked student work. The team further noted that two non-members of the Board, including the Principal, had attended the December 2013 meeting to discuss the possibility of redesigning student assessment.

1.34   Overall, while the review team acknowledges good practice in the comprehensiveness and usefulness to students of the School's assessment practices, the weaknesses it identified in data systems and in the operation of the Assessment Board led the team to conclude, on balance, that this Expectation is not met. The weakness in the operation of part of the School's governance structure as it relates to assessment means that the risk in this area is moderate.

Expectation: Not met
Level of risk: Moderate

Maintenance of the threshold academic standards of awards: Summary of findings

1.35   In reaching its judgement about the School's maintenance of threshold academic standards, the review team matched its findings against the published criteria specified in Annex two of the published handbook. Five Expectations in this judgement area are met, and the risk is deemed to be low against four of these and moderate in one. The remaining Expectation is not met with a moderate risk attached. There are no affirmations or examples of good practice, though the good practice identified under Expectation B6 contributes to the effectiveness of the School's management of its responsibilities under Expectation A6. There is one recommendation about the security of assessment data, which relates to the completion of a planned software upgrade. The review team concludes, therefore, that the maintenance of the threshold academic standards of awards **meets** UK expectations.

2   Judgement: Quality of student learning opportunities

Expectation (B1): Higher education providers have effective processes for the design and approval of programmes.

Quality Code, *Chapter B1: Programme design and approval*

Findings

2.1   The DTTLS delivered by the School is designed and approved by the awarding organisation, Pearson.

2.2   To date, the School has not developed any programmes itself. Nevertheless, it has adopted principles and regulations for programme design and approval, whose status is not entirely clear since they were not included within the compendium of quality assurance policies available on the School's website at the time of the review visit. The review team notes that the regulations borrow very heavily from a policy in operation at a large university in northern England, with few adaptations or amendments. In consequence, the School's regulations contain several inaccuracies, including under 'General Principles', a statement that 'The School is responsible for the academic standards of its programmes', and refers at one point to the 'University' rather than the 'School' and to 'schools' as academic sub-divisions when, in fact, the School comprises two departments. Elements of the regulations are also irrelevant to the School, such as their coverage of collaborative programmes delivered by other institutions under affiliation agreements, which the School does not have. Thus, the School's principles and regulations in this area have the potential to mislead or confuse the staff responsible for implementing them. The inaccuracies and irrelevancies also indicate a lack of rigour in the process by which the regulations were developed and adopted. The team **recommends**, therefore, in the light of these regulations and others cited in the following sections, that the School undertake a review of all its policies and procedures, as well as the information given to staff and students about these policies and procedures, with a view to ensuring that all this information is fit-for-purpose and trustworthy by October 2014.

2.3   At the time of the review visit the School was advertising a number of new higher-level programmes for the 2014-15 academic year on its website. According to the programme design and approval process in operation when these new programmes were being developed, approval should have followed a four-stage process beginning with strategic approval by Academic Board, then business case approval by the Senior Management Team (SMT), followed by academic approval by Academic Board and then final approval by the SMT. Pursuant to the published Higher Education Review method, approximately nine weeks before the review visit the review team asked to see the minutes of all Academic Board meetings held since the beginning of 2012, in part so that it could see evidence of the implementation of the programme approval process outlined above. Yet the School provided minutes of just one meeting held on 4 July 2012. The School provided further meeting minutes during the latter stages of the review visit, which allowed the team to see that Academic Board had given strategic approval to the new programmes on 28 May 2013. However, the team could not find any evidence in the minutes of the Senior Management Committee of the second or fourth stages of the process having been undertaken. (The team did identify a discussion of the business case at the Board of Directors' meeting on 1 July 2013, but also noted this meeting was inquorate and took place after academic approval had apparently been granted – see below.)

2.4   After the review visit had ended, the School provided the minutes of a meeting of the Academic Board held on 25 June 2013, which appeared to have given academic approval to the new programmes (though the minutes did not make this explicit). According

to the process document, to give academic approval this meeting should have received a completed programme specification, unit specifications and table mapping assessments and intended learning outcomes. However, the review team was not provided with any record of that meeting having received and considered this information. The team was concerned, therefore, that according to the School's own procedures the information base on which Academic Board had apparently granted academic approval was insufficient, and that, in consequence, the School had not assured itself that the academic standards and quality of student learning opportunities on these programmes would be adequate.

2.5   Overall, in view of both the inaccuracies and irrelevancies in the School's regulations for programme approval, and the failure of the School to apply these regulations rigorously to the new programmes which it was intending to launch in late 2014, the review team concluded that the School's processes for the design and approval of programmes are not sufficiently effective to meet this Expectation. The Expectation is, therefore, not met. Given that the new programmes have not begun, the team concludes that the associated risk is moderate, rather than serious, since the School has time to consider in more detail the quality of learning opportunities for students on the new programme before they get underway.

Expectation: Not met
Level of risk: Moderate

Expectation (B2): Policies and procedures used to admit students are clear, fair, explicit and consistently applied.

Quality Code, *Chapter B2: Admissions*

Findings

2.6   The School's DTLLS programme is specifically targeted at local people, many of whom have poor educational attainment to date and/or are drawn from groups which are underrepresented in higher education. Admissions information is posted on the School's website. Applicants are advised to contact the Registrar for admissions advice and invited to participate in an initial advice and guidance interview. The School has an Admissions Policy based on the Quality Code. The School's Academic Board takes overall responsibility for admissions, and complaints and appeals may be made to the Principal.

2.7   The team reviewed the School's adherence to this Expectation by looking at documentary evidence, including on the School's website, and by talking to staff and students.

2.8   Several students told the review team that they enrolled with the School owing to personal recommendations from friends and family members. The website sets out the offer of programmes and provides contact details. However, key advice that would be beneficial to students is omitted, such as course commencement dates and user-friendly assessment details. There is also potential confusion as an older School website may be located through a web search.

2.9   The initial advice and guidance (IAG) interview, conducted by one of the core members of staff, helps applicants determine whether the programme is appropriate for them. All students are interviewed, enhancing the admissions process. However, if the planned expansion in higher education is realised, the current interview system may be difficult to sustain.

2.10   Student needs for further learning support are identified through diagnostic testing. Students whom the review team met gave positive accounts of the value of IAG interviews and how literacy, numeracy and study skills support have subsequently been provided to help them through the DTLLS programme. Induction for students comprises these support sessions together with further information often provided individually. This early support contributes to the team's identification of the comprehensiveness of the School's assessment practices as **good practice**. Students whom the team met expressed their general satisfaction with arrangements for admission and induction. The School has recently obtained Matrix accreditation for its administrative arrangements covering this area.

2.11   The School Admissions Policy repeats sections of the Quality Code and outlines the key responsibilities for admissions within the School management structure. It is not clear whether the policy has been updated to reflect the most recent iteration of *Chapter B2: Recruitment, selection and admission to higher education*.

2.12   Staff involved in admissions are given in-house training and the review team formed the view that they are equipped for their role and are committed to supporting potential and new students of the School.

2.13   Academic Board has final responsibility for admissions. However, the review team did not find a clear record of the Board's consideration of admissions information in the minutes of Board meetings. The team therefore **recommends** that the School should systematically evaluate key management information and monitor any follow-up actions

arising from that evaluation. The team is also concerned that current spreadsheet systems for recording student data are insufficiently secure.

2.14   The review team concludes that policies and procedures used to admit students are appropriate and effective, but that further development of processes for the monitoring and review of admissions is required. If planned growth in student numbers is implemented, risk to the provision will increase unless these processes are enhanced.

2.15   The Expectation is therefore met, and if student numbers continue at around the current level, the 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

2.16   The School's Teaching and Learning policy repeats the guidance offered in the DTLLS handbook and describes how students will be exposed to a variety of teaching, learning and assessment approaches through their development. There is also a School Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy and a Learning Teaching and Assessment Enhancement Strategy; however, it is not clear how these interface with the Teaching and Learning policy; some content is repeated.

2.17   Academic Board is responsible for the strategic direction of teaching and learning and takes responsibility for all programme-based activities. However, records of Academic Board meetings do not clearly demonstrate how these responsibilities are exercised.

2.18   The team reviewed a range of documentation relating to the strategic management of, and policies concerned with, teaching and learning in the School. They also examined documents aimed at students concerned with teaching and learning and discussed approaches to teaching and learning with students and staff.

2.19   All DTLLS students are required to develop an individual learning plan at induction which forms the basis of their further studies. Specialist staff work with students as required to facilitate the attainment of the skillset required to eventually achieve qualified teacher status. Personal development planning and reflective practice are embedded in the programme and students are encouraged to undertake community-based projects either as their placement or as extracurricular activity.

2.20   Placements in teaching practice settings form an integral part of the DTLLS programme. The School supports students in identifying appropriate placements where they are not already employed in teaching roles and monitors the suitability of those placements. A peer-to-peer mentoring scheme has been piloted to provide support between students in securing placements.

2.21   New members of teaching staff are offered a Learning, Teaching and Assessment module as well as ongoing staff development in their role. Teaching observations of staff are conducted with some peer review and some manager observations, linking in to annual appraisals. As some staff are themselves DTLLS students undergoing lesson observations, and supporting policy documentation lacked detail, it was difficult to clearly establish the School's approach in this area.

2.22   The School promotes the use of e-resources and it is developing its virtual learning environment (VLE). Students find that the VLE effectively supports their studies and, despite some problems with the availability of IT resources, they value the facilities available to them. The School is taking steps to resolve a shortage of suitable teaching space.

2.23   Students benefit from small group teaching and have good opportunities to interact with their tutors and fellow students. The School has improved success rates for summative assessment by incremental preparation for major assessment tasks; this too is well

supported through small group size and ease of personal contact with tutors. The external verifier is complimentary about teaching and learning practice in the School.

2.24   Although Annual Programme Review reports do refer to some teaching and learning issues raised by students - for example, criticisms of IT space and students' ability to use the VLE effectively - a clear approach to the identification and management of teaching and learning issues is not evident in the School's quality assurance processes. Action plans lack detail and students' involvement in review processes is not explicit. This is discussed in more detail under Expectation B8.

2.25   The review team concludes that teaching and learning for the DTLLS programme is appropriately and effectively conducted, although there remain some ongoing resource issues. The team acknowledges that there has been recent progress in addressing student concerns regarding, for example, wireless availability and printing. However, the team has concerns that the School has not yet established clear and effective systems to capture and evaluate key management information and monitor any follow-up actions arising from that evaluation. This contributes to the recommendation set out in paragraph 2.13.

2.26   The Expectation is, therefore, met; the lack of strategic oversight and well developed quality assurance processes creates moderate risk which would be exacerbated with growth of programmes or student numbers.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

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

2.27   The School strives to put students at the centre of its activities. Although strategy and policy documents do not clearly indicate how student development and achievement will be facilitated, key roles for senior staff to oversee student development and achievement have been established. These include the Director of Studies, Welfare Officer and the Careers Coach/Adviser, with whom specialist staff work as necessary. The DTLLS programme includes mandatory work experience which is supported by the School and facilitates future employment of students.

2.28   To assess fulfilment of this Expectation, the review team examined a range of documentation, including strategy and policy documents, committee papers, student handbooks and assessment materials. It discussed approaches to supporting students' development and achievement with staff and students. The team also saw demonstrations of the VLE and the management information system.

2.29   The School interviews all new entrants to establish a learning platform through initial advice and guidance. The interview establishes students' personal requirements, establishing individual learning plans, including those relating to disability or specific learning needs. Staff with specialist skills are involved in the additional support provided to students. The DTLLS programme offers both progression from other programmes delivered by the School and a direct link into experience and employment in a teaching role. A number of students whom the team met had progressed through the levels of teacher training at the School and valued the opportunities thus provided to their career development.

2.30   Staff whom the team met demonstrated a commitment to student development, for example facilitating incremental work on assessment and supporting innovative community-based placements for teaching practice. Students attend careers sessions offered by the School and receive individual or small group advice from the recently appointed Careers Coach/Adviser. Students feel they are well supported in achieving their goals.

2.31   The School has begun to develop its VLE, with remote access, to support learning and personal development. Students appreciate this facility and find it valuable within their selected mode of study. Initial and follow-up training is provided as necessary for students and staff. Although the VLE is currently offered at a basic level, there is support among staff for further development, for example via discussion areas or in monitoring its use.

2.32   Core learning resources are provided to students as part of their programme package and students are encouraged to use public library services local to their home or location of study.

2.33   Staff are encouraged to undertake ongoing development and, where necessary, working patterns are rearranged to fit in with their study commitments. Their development needs are established through the annual appraisal scheme. One member of staff is undertaking a higher degree, and in-house update and briefing sessions are offered. Some staff members have substantial experience and skills gained in other employments, and share these with their colleagues.

2.34   As noted under Expectations B2 and B3, quality assurance processes are not sufficiently well developed to contribute effectively to student development and achievement.

In the annual monitoring review process, data is not reliably recorded or tracked and analysis requires further development. Equally, systems for recording assessment results are insecure; results may be overwritten and reliability of records cannot be fully assured. While numbers remain small, the oversight of the programme leader ensures appropriate standards are maintained, but a growth in recruitment would necessitate the establishment of more robust systems. This contributes to the recommendation set out in paragraph 2.13.

2.35   In the light of the above findings, the team concludes that the Expectation is met and that the level of risk is moderate.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

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

2.36   The School states that students are central to its function, yet the process by which this aim is fulfilled is not clearly articulated in key policy documents or plans. A system of student representation is in place and is facilitated by the Welfare Officer. Student representatives attend a Student/Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) which meets regularly to share matters relating to the student experience and programme delivery. Feedback questionnaires are used at intervals throughout the programme, including post-induction and course completion. Small group teaching facilitates informal feedback from students and students are encouraged to raise issues directly with senior staff.

2.37   Each class identifies a president and a representative who takes responsibility for collecting students' views and communicating them through the SSLC. A senior member of staff attends the SSLC and students value the opportunity to discuss their views both through this forum and via the Principal's 'open-door' policy. A 'You said, we did' system of providing responses to issues raised by students has recently been introduced.

2.38   Records of SSLC meetings are brief and it is not clear how the outcomes of these discussions are formally taken through the School's other committees. A similar situation for feedback questionnaires prevails: the School's committees consider these questionnaires, but records do not specify issues, action points or timelines in such a way that action or responses to feedback can be readily tracked or monitored.

2.39   The School has expressed a commitment to involving students in the annual monitoring and its Procedure for the Conduct of Annual Monitoring and Review states that lecturers should draw on student inputs from consultations and surveys in compiling a report for each unit, which contribute to the overall report. There is some evidence that students have attended meetings but student understanding of their potential role in quality assurance is yet to be developed. Students have the opportunity to meet external verifiers and recent external verifier reports indicate that there is a good degree of satisfaction among students. External verifiers also confirm that students are actively consulted about their programme.

2.40   Although formal mechanisms for student engagement are still to be fully developed, students benefit from small group interaction with tutors and regular opportunities for raising issues informally. Students whom the review team met said that they found the School responsive to their needs.

2.41   The review team concludes that there are satisfactory opportunities for students to make known their views, and that the School tends to respond appropriately. Student involvement in committees is developing. The Expectation is, therefore, met. Mechanisms for student engagement are yet to be formally expressed and the management of student feedback through quality assurance processes needs to be more clearly recorded to enable effective monitoring, particularly if student numbers increase. The risk is, therefore, moderate.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

Expectation (B6): Higher education providers ensure that students have appropriate opportunities to show they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the award of a qualification or credit.

Quality Code, *Chapter B6: Assessment of students and accreditation of prior learning*

Findings

2.42   The School's approach to assessing student is described in its Assessment Policy. The review team notes that this policy borrows heavily from the assessment policy of a university in Scotland with few adaptations. In consequence, several parts of the School's policy are irrelevant, inaccurate and/or inappropriate. For example, the policy recognises the 'wide range of disciplines taught within the School' and its 'devolved nature', and describes the arrangements for the assessment of modules provided in a language other than English, which the School does not have. Again, the presence of such inaccuracies and irrelevancies in formal procedures indicates a lack of rigour in their development and adoption and adds further weight to the recommendation set out in paragraph 2.2. The team also has a concern about the way students' marks are recorded, leading to a recommendation in paragraph 1.31.

2.43   Notwithstanding those concerns, the review team's analysis of the implementation by teaching staff of those parts of the Assessment Policy which do apply to the School reveal that practice is generally sound.

2.44   Teaching staff in the departments have primary responsibility for the implementation of assessment and are expected to ensure consistency with the awarding body guidelines. All new academic staff members are trained in assessment by the programme leader or internal verifier. All assignments developed by the School are subject to internal verification before they are issued to students. The School uses second marking and plans to introduce anonymous marking in the future. The team saw evidence of robust internal verification and of the School responding appropriately to the recommendations of the external verifier.

2.45   The students whom the team met understood the timing and types of assessment they were expected to undertake. The School's Assessment Policy commits it to giving students feedback on their summative assessments within 10 working days of submission, and students confirmed to the team that this deadline was almost always met. The team saw several examples of marked work which included detailed feedback. The team was also given an overview of incremental assessment techniques used in the VLE.

2.46   Overall, the review team considers that the comprehensiveness and usefulness to students of the assessment practices of teaching staff is **good practice**. The team concludes that this Expectation is met and the level of risk 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

2.47   The arrangements for the external examination of the DTLLS provision are prescribed by the awarding organisation, Pearson, and outlined in the Programme Designation letter. The awarding organisation is responsible for appointing, training and supporting the external examiner and for ensuring they perform the role effectively, and these elements are, therefore, not within the scope of this review.

2.48   The School also has its own policy on external examining, which the policy itself acknowledges is largely redundant as long as the School provides only programmes whose arrangements for external examining are prescribed by other organisations. The review team noted that this policy, as with several others published by the School, reflects very closely the equivalent policy of a degree-awarding university and, as such, is comprehensive but contains much that is irrelevant and inappropriate for a provider of the School's size and circumstances.

2.49   The team further notes that the School's Assessment Policy (outlined under Expectation B6) makes reference to the moderation of Assessment Board by external examiners, which is neither required by the School's awarding organisation nor provided for in Assessment Board's terms of reference or membership. This inaccuracy again highlights a lack of rigour in the way in which quality assurance processes are designed and adopted and contributes to the recommendation in paragraph 2.2.

2.50   In practice, the School's responsibilities for external examining are limited to hosting regular visits by the external examiner, submitting work for moderation and responding to any recommendations arising. The review team saw several of the external examiner's reports, which confirm that the School's management of standards is sound and that, on the whole, the School considers the reports and responds to any recommendations. The team also notes from its discussions with staff and students, however, that external examiner reports are not made available to students. The team **recommends**, therefore, that external examiner reports are made available to students by October 2014.

2.51   The team considers that Expectation B7 has been met, and that the associated risk level is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B8): Higher education providers have effective procedures in place to routinely monitor and periodically review programmes.

Quality Code, *Chapter B8: Programme monitoring and review*

Findings

2.52   The School monitors the academic standards and quality of its DTLLS provision according to its annual monitoring procedure. The review team noted that the procedure borrows very heavily from another higher education institution, highlighting again the lack of rigour in the School's development of quality assurance procedures.

2.53   According to the approved procedure, the programme leader compiles an annual monitoring report informed by various data including student progression and achievement, feedback from student consultations and surveys and external examiner reports. The reports are then discussed by teaching staff and in Staff-Student Forums before being submitted to Academic Board to allow the consideration of larger issues arising which have implications for the whole School.

2.54   The review team analysed the implementation and effectiveness of the School's approach to annual monitoring by reading Annual Programme Review reports for 2011-12 and 2012-13, the action plans arising from those reports and the minutes of Academic Board meetings (although these minutes were not provided until the latter stages of the review visit - see paragraph 2.3). The team noted that the action plans neglect some of the issues raised in the corresponding review reports. For example, although the 2012-13 report mentions timetabling and space allocation, physical resources and the VLE, among others, as 'issues for consideration at institutional level', none of these are specified in the 'Action plan for the year 2013-14' which appears at the end of the 2012-13 report. Moreover, the minutes of the Academic Board, which is obliged to 'receive or compile, and approve, Annual Monitoring Reports', do not demonstrate a consideration of these reports or the issues they raise; and there is no evidence in the minutes of Staff-Student Forums provided to the review team of the reports having been considered there. The team, therefore, **recommends** that the School implement a more rigorous and evaluative annual monitoring procedure by October 2014.

2.55   The programme leader is responsible for monitoring, communicating and incorporating any changes to the programme made by the awarding organisation. The review team could not identify a tracking system for ensuring that any changes are communicated and implemented effectively.

2.56   The School's periodic review procedures are contained in its principles and regulations on Programme Design, Approval, Amendment, Review and Withdrawal. As described under Expectation B1, this document borrows heavily from one in operation at a large university with few alterations and adaptations. Given that the procedures require periodic review every five or six years, and that the School has only been delivering the DTLLS programme for two and a half years, the procedure is unlikely to be activated until 2016. It should be amended before then according to the recommendation in paragraph 2.2.

2.57   The same principles and regulations on Programme Design, Approval, Amendment, Review and Withdrawal also deal with programme withdrawal. Again, this part of the policy contains a number of inaccuracies, including reference to the 'University' rather than the 'School' and to 'Schools and Colleges' as the academic units. It also, therefore, requires amending in line with the recommendation in paragraph 2.2.

2.58   Overall, given the inaccuracies in the School's policies for annual monitoring and periodic review noted above, the review team regards the design of these policies as not being fully effective. The team also noted weaknesses in the School's application of its annual monitoring procedure, as described in paragraph 2.54, and was concerned, in particular, that the weaknesses in the School's ability to capture, and consider at an institutional level, the issues raised in annual monitoring reports meant that these issues might remain unresolved and, therefore, jeopardise students' learning opportunities. Putting these design and operational issues together, the team concludes that the School does not have effective procedures in place to routinely monitor and periodically review programmes. This Expectation is, therefore, not met. The associated level of risk is moderate, because it relates to a lack of rigour in the School's processes for developing and ensuring the implementation of its policies and procedures, rather than significant gaps in policy or procedures, which, in the team's view, would constitute a serious risk.

Expectation: Not met
Level of risk: Moderate

Expectation (B9): Higher education providers have fair, effective and timely procedures for handling students' complaints and academic appeals.

Quality Code, *Chapter B9: Academic complaints and student appeals*

Findings

2.59   The School's procedures for handling students' complaints and appeals are contained in separate policies published on its website. These policies are communicated to students during their induction and again in both course and students handbooks, and the students whom the review team met were aware of them.

2.60   The policies themselves are clear and detailed, and make explicit the distinction between what the School is entitled to investigate and what must be referred to its awarding organisation. The School has never received a formal complaint or appeal about any aspect of the DTLLS programme. The students whom the team met said they would tend to try and resolve any issues informally with teaching staff in the first instance, or take advantage of the Principal's open-door policy to raise issues with him. The team also notes the use of a Welfare Log by the School to identify, and track the resolution of, any concerns raised by students.

2.61   Based on the design and dissemination of the School's policies on handling students' complaints and appeals, the review team considers this Expectation to be met and the associated level of risk low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B10: Managing higher education provision with others*

Findings

2.62   Students must complete at least 100 hours of teaching practice to complete the DTLLS programme successfully. This practice may be in a traditional teaching setting, such as a school or college, or part of a community outreach or support activity.

2.63   The School Welfare Officer helps students find suitable placements with the aid of a database of placement providers, and once a placement is agreed in principle the School and placement provider sign a formal teaching practice service agreement. Students on placements receive formal placement visits by a member of the School's teaching staff. These visits are formally recorded. Students may also contact teaching staff for informal support with their placements as necessary.

2.64   The review team discussed the School's arrangements for facilitating and supporting teaching practice with staff and students, and saw examples of service agreements and placement reports. This evidence demonstrates that teaching placements are managed effectively. Students whom the team met were particularly positive about the opportunities they have to put their skills and knowledge into action. The team concludes, therefore, that the School met this Expectation and that the associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.65   In reaching its judgement about the quality of student learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings to the criteria specified in Annex two of the published handbook. Of the 10 applicable Expectations for this judgement area, eight are met; three with moderate risks attached and five with low risks. Two Expectations are not met, both with moderate risk. Thus, most applicable Expectations have been met and, although there are no serious risks, half of the applicable Expectations exhibit moderate risks which could lead to serious problems over time, particularly if provision at higher level expands.

2.66   There is one feature of good practice connected to assessment practices (Expectation B6), and four recommendations relating to the following: a review of all policies and procedures and associated information (B1, B6, B7, B8); the use of key management information (B2, B3, B4); sharing external examiner reports with students (B7); and the implementation of a more rigorous and evaluative annual monitoring procedure (B8). Although the apparent failure of the School to follow its own programme approval process for the new programmes advertised on its website may constitute a breach of its own management procedures (which is possible grounds for a 'does not meet' judgement), the review team concluded, on balance, that its recommendations tend to conform to the criteria for a 'requires improvement' judgement. More specifically, the recommendation for the review of policies and procedures is made in the context of quality assurance procedures which are broadly adequate but have some shortcomings in terms of the rigour with which they have been developed, adopted and applied, whereas the recommendations about key management information and annual monitoring indicate insufficient emphasis or priority being given to assuring quality in the School's planning processes.

2.67   Overall, therefore, the review team concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities **requires improvement to meet** UK expectations.

3   Judgement: Quality of the information produced about its provision

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 School submitted to the review team a formal Publications Policy and Procedures document, which, according to its introduction, is informed by *Part C: Information about higher education provision* of the Quality Code. There is also a Publications Policy and Procedure among the policy documents published on the School's website, which overlaps with the document referred to above and contradicts it in several respects. For example, the document on the website states that the Director of Studies is responsible for checking and signing off material for publication, whereas the version given to the team says this responsibility lies with the Principal; and whereas the document on the website claims the Quality Assurance Manager has responsibility for version control of documents, the other document says this is one of the jobs of the Director of Studies. The team is concerned that the School's procedures for ensuring the accuracy and consistency of information are in themselves inconsistent (particularly given that both had apparently been subject to version control) and recommends that these procedures are revised in line with the recommendation contained in paragraph 2.2.

3.2   In practice, the review team heard that the School uses a hierarchical approval system for ensuring the quality of its information, with new or revised information about the DTLLS programme being drafted by the programme leader and then checked by the Director of Studies and Principal, thereby ensuring that all information is reviewed by at least two members of senior staff. Version numbers are attached to most documents to provide a record of updates.

3.3   The development and maintenance of the School's website is outsourced but supervised by the Principal and Director of Studies; according to both versions of the Publications Policy and Procedures, the website is checked weekly and monthly and 'annual routines are in place for checking and changing publications'.

3.4   The review team analysed the School's adherence to this Expectation by reading a wide range of information produced by the School, including information available on the website, and talking to staff and students about it.

3.5   The team notes that, at the time of the review visit, there were two websites available, ccp.biz and ccp.ac, which carried different information. The School explained that it was in the process of migrating content from the former to the latter, and had to maintain the outgoing ccp.biz site for a limited period because some students continued to access the VLE from that site. The team noted that the School was aware of the potential for students or others to access out-of-date information from the ccp.biz site and was assured that the site was due to close in the very near future.

3.6   The information current students require is provided by a combination of the student programme and student handbooks and resources on the VLE. Between them, the handbooks contain the programme specification and a range of essential information for students, including attendance requirements and the School's procedures on the submission

of assessments. The review team identified an inconsistency between the attendance requirements specified in the two handbooks (80 per cent in the student handbook versus 85 per cent in the student programme handbook), which the School may wish to address.

3.7   The students whom the review team met were generally positive about the information provided by the School and commended the continuing development and accessibility of the VLE.

3.8   Information for staff with responsibilities for managing academic standards and quality is compiled in a Quality Manual and compendium of policies. As noted elsewhere in this report, some of these policies borrow heavily from policies in operation elsewhere in the higher education sector with few alterations and adaptations. In consequence, they contain a number of inaccuracies and are also to some extent inappropriate and/or irrelevant to the School. Some of the School's policies and procedures, therefore, have the potential to mislead or confuse the staff responsible for implementing them. This is the subject of a recommendation in paragraph 2.2.

3.9   Overall, while the review team had concerns about the information provided to enable staff to discharge their duties effectively, it also noted that the information provided by the School to its students is broadly fit-for-purpose, accessible and trustworthy. This Expectation is, therefore, met and the associated level of risk moderate given the issues with information for staff.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

Quality of the information produced about its provision: Summary of findings

3.10   In coming to its judgement about the quality of information, the review team compared its findings to the criteria set out in Annex two of the published handbook. The Expectation for this area is met and the level of risk moderate. There are no examples of good practice, no affirmations and no recommendations, though there is a link to a recommendation contained in section B1 which touches on information for staff with responsibility for maintaining standards and assuring quality. The review team concludes, therefore, that the quality of information about learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

4 Judgement: 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 School states that students are at the centre of its operations and that enhancement is integrated into its mainstream activities. This integration is reflected in a Teaching and Assessment Enhancement Strategy.

4.2   In its consideration of this Expectation, the team took into account a range of documentary evidence, including the strategy mentioned above, and discussed enhancement with a wide range of staff and current and former students.

4.3   Senior staff whom the review team met were aware of QAA's definition of enhancement but could not clearly articulate how the School's approach demonstrated the deliberate steps of this definition. Teaching staff referred to student feedback as a driver for enhancement, but were not aware of policies or processes providing a systematic approach in this area. However, they were able to give a number of examples of how students' experiences had been improved, including the appointment of a Careers Coach/Mentor who provides pastoral care and guidance, a Literacy Group, a glossary for students, and encouraging students to watch Teacher TV. Students endorsed these examples and noted how the approachability of teaching staff and their responsiveness to issues raised by students had enhanced their experience. Good practice is informally shared through, for example, circular emails.

4.4   The Learning, Teaching and Assessment Enhancement Strategy lacks a clear focus on enhancement and does not describe how enhancement might be achieved through the School's current systems and procedures.

4.5   The management of quality assurance procedures, specifically those for Annual Programme Review, is insufficiently developed to support effective enhancement. The action plans associated with annual review lack appropriate detail to allow effective monitoring of objectives. Although student feedback is collected, a systematic approach to its management and use as an enhancement tool is not evident. The review team therefore **recommends** that the School develop a deliberate, School-level approach to enhancing the quality of students' learning opportunities.

4.6   The review team concludes that the delivery of higher education is at an early stage in the School and processes for supporting that delivery are not as yet fully developed. Policies and procedures are not appropriately designed to meet the specific needs of the School and its students. Although the School is responsive to student feedback, opportunities to improve student learning opportunities are not systematically and deliberately identified and taken. The Expectation is, therefore, not met and the risk is moderate.

Expectation: Not met
Level of risk: Moderate

Enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

4.7   In reaching its judgement about enhancement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex two of the published handbook. The Expectation for this area is not met and the risk is deemed to be moderate. There are no examples of good practice or affirmation. There is one recommendation for the development of a more deliberate approach to enhancing students' learning opportunities, which reflects both a weakness in the operation of part of the School's governance structure and insufficient emphasis or priority being given to enhancement in planning processes. The team concludes, therefore, that the enhancement of student learning opportunities **requires improvement to meet** UK expectations.

5   Commentary on the Theme: Student Employability

Findings

5.1   The review team notes that the School's current provision, centred on educating prospective teachers, is geared towards a range of public and private providers within the teaching profession, and that its placement activity is appropriate to this profession.

5.2   Some recent initiatives appear to be galvanising the School's approach to employability, including the use of ambassadors to create placement opportunities for students in target recruitment markets. While this is to be encouraged insofar as it promotes employability, its fitness-for-purpose and quality assurance will need to be carefully monitored.

5.3   The School has recently appointed a Career Coach/Mentor, one of whose functions is to embed employability within careers advice, guidance and support. The review team regards this as a positive step, and the School will wish to consider how the role can usefully expand to meet employer and other expectations of students within a highly competitive employability climate. More visits by employers to the School and master classes and classroom engagement with students would be welcomed by students and teaching staff.

5.4   While the review team did not meet employers during its visit, the team did note a range of appropriate placement activity, which students said was well supported by School staff. Formal placement activity is for short periods only, takes place within an established curriculum structure, and is appropriately monitored by the School, although the School should consider a placement strategy or similar if its work-based learning and associated provision expands, particularly in new subject areas such as business.

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 in the Higher Education Review (Plus) handbook.

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

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

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.