Higher Education Review of Central Bedfordshire College

February 2016

Contents

About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Central Bedfordshire College. The review took place from 16 to 18 February 2016 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Mr Mike Ridout
- Dr David Blackwell
- Ms Cara Williams (student reviewer).

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provided by Central Bedfordshire 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 6.

In reviewing Central Bedfordshire 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 2015-16 are Student Employability and Digital Literacy,[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.

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[1] The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at:
www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code.
[2] Higher Education Review themes:
www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2859.
[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 Central Bedfordshire College

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at Central Bedfordshire College.

- The setting and maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of its degree-awarding body and other awarding organisation **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of the information about learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The enhancement of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following features of **good practice** at Central Bedfordshire College.

- The impartial and inclusive nature of advice and guidance provided for students during the recruitment process (Expectation B2).
- The introduction of philosophical enquiry as a methodology across all programmes to enhance student capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking (Expectation B3 and Enhancement).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations** to Central Bedfordshire College.

By September 2016:

- formalise a mechanism for the capture and dissemination of information about employer relationships (Expectations B1, B3 and B10)
- ensure that plagiarism-detection software is applied to all programmes (Expectation B6)
- ensure a systematic approach to the timely production of accessible public information (Expectation C).

Affirmation of action being taken

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

- The recent steps taken to involve students in decisions that impact on the enhancement of their educational experience (Expectation B5).

Theme: Student Employability

The College made the strategic decision in 2001, reiterated in the 2012 Strategy for Higher Education, and again in the new Strategy, to focus its efforts on vocational programmes preparing students for employment or to enhance their opportunities for promotion at work, and decided to offer foundation degrees and Higher Nationals. Student employability is at

the heart of the College's higher education offer, which is reviewed annually by Learning Area Managers (LAMs) and shaped in the light of labour market intelligence gleaned from employers and partners. Approximately 70 per cent of the current student cohort is in employment relevant to the subject of their course, with 30 per cent having progressed from Level 3, mostly within the College.

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

About Central Bedfordshire College

Central Bedfordshire College is a general further education college. The College's primary focus is to provide vocational and technical education and training for its local community, which consists of Dunstable, Luton, Leighton Buzzard, and surrounding villages. The College provides vocational learning in all 15 of the government's sector subject areas. The College has a total of 4,420 students: 180 apprentices and 174 higher education students, with the remainder taking vocational programmes from entry level to Level 5. Prescribed higher education programmes currently provide approximately 6 per cent of the College's income.

All College activity is informed by the College's strategic objectives, as detailed in the Strategic Plan. Aims and Objectives for Higher Education are established in, and developed from, the Higher Education Strategy.

The curriculum is managed through the College's Learning Areas. Each Learning Area has a LAM. Higher education provision sits in the Learning Area relevant to its sectors, and is managed by the relevant LAM. There is a dedicated LAM for higher education, who acts as coordinator for all higher education activity. Higher education activity is coordinated in a practical way through the Higher Education Strategy Group (HESG), which meets monthly.

Currently, the College has higher education provision in four subject areas: Media, Childcare, Technology and Education. In order to ensure relevance, the College has directed its development of higher education in line with local government data on the number of local residents who remain in education to NVQ Level 4, South East Midlands Local Education Partnership skills priorities, and feedback from the College's Level 3 students, who are looking for local progression routes into higher education. In summer 2015, after analysis of student recruitment over time, the decision was made to close all provision in Art and Design. As a consequence, HNC/D in Fine Art and Fashion will no longer be run by the College. There were no students continuing on these programmes.

The College formed a relationship with the University of Bedfordshire shortly after the government gave permission to universities to validate the delivery of foundation degrees in general further education colleges in 2001. Foundation degrees aligned with the ethos of the College in that they are work-based, seek to make higher education more accessible to those less likely to engage in higher education qualifications, and provide opportunity for students to enter the workplace or progress to technical roles within and beyond it. The College partnered with the University to offer foundation degrees in Creative Arts and Education. The College continues to offer Pearson-validated courses in Education and Graphic Design. Child and Family Studies was added in 2013 and has recruited successfully for three successive years.

A new partnership with the University of Northampton offers further opportunity for growth. The College is seeking validation for a Foundation Degree in Health and Social Care and an HND in Business this year.

The College has made good progress towards addressing the recommendations from the last review and continues to review and monitor the action plan on a regular basis.

Explanation of the findings about Central Bedfordshire 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.

Explanation of the findings about Central Bedfordshire College

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Quality Code, *Chapter A1: UK and European Reference Points for Academic Standards*

Findings

1.1   Central Bedfordshire College (the College) does not have degree awarding powers for carrying out college-based higher education. It relies on its partner awarding body and organisation, the University of Bedfordshire (UoB) and Pearson Education respectively, to set academic standards and procedures for maintaining the security of the award of credit and qualifications. A formal partnership with UoB was established in 2001.

1.2   The review team tested the operation and effectiveness of the process by considering information contained within the Partnership Agreement, external examiner reports, the Quality Handbook, Pearson Quality Review and Development Report and Pearson standards verifier reports. This evidence would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.3   The responsibilities for the UoB programmes are set out in the Partnership Agreement, which clearly defines and differentiates between the roles and responsibilities of the University and College. The relationship with the UoB is managed by the University and the College using the processes described in UoB's Quality Handbook and according to the University regulations. There is a Procedures Manual describing day-to-day operation. Link coordinators work with the College Learning Area and corresponding UoB departments, and communicate updates and changes to regulations and working procedures. During 2014-15, the College was the subject of a full Institutional Review by the UoB and the partnership is

now confirmed for a further five years from September 2015. Programmes are subject to UoB quality assurance procedures, as set out in the Quality Handbook.

1.4 External examiners are appointed by UoB, and standards verifiers by Pearson, as part of these arrangements. In their reports, external examiners and standards verifiers confirm that standards are upheld. The 2015 Pearson Quality Review and Development Report confirms that there is a robust, consistent and transparent approach to the verification and management of BTEC external assessment undertaken at the centre. Pearson Standards Verifier reports confirm that all quality processes are in place and are effective.

1.5 The QAA Higher Education Review for UoB, carried out in June 2015, confirmed that the setting and maintenance of the academic standards of awards meets UK expectations. The review considered the comprehensive arrangements in place to support collaborative partnerships, including clear governance and the effective support provided by account managers and link coordinators, to be good practice.

1.6 A formal institutional approval process with the University of Northampton (UoN) took place in summer 2014. This led to a Partnership Agreement. The College has prepared for validation of a Foundation Degree in Health and Social Care to be offered in 2016, and an HND in Business is in development.

1.7 The academic standards are set and assured by the UoB and Pearson. The responsibilities for this are clearly set out. Standards are duly monitored and reported on by external examiners and standards verifiers, and by quality management processes that are clearly defined and adhered to. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the 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

1.8   Overall responsibility for the management of higher education lies with the College Corporation Standards Committee, which is part of an overall committee and reporting structure. Standards and quality assurance are overseen by a strategic HESG, chaired by the Vice Principal for Curriculum and Standards. The HESG receives summary reports in response to external examiners' reports, along with annual monitoring reports (AMRs). The higher education self-assessment report (SAR) provides an opportunity for reflection on practice, and oversees the quality of teaching and learning through the monitoring of academic standards.

1.9   The review team considered a range of documentation including the Higher Education Quality Guide, Higher Education Assessment Policy, Partnership Agreement, UoB Quality Handbook, Procedures Manual, and external examiner and standards verifier reports. This evidence would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.10   The framework for the regulations and governance of the College, and the roles of its partners, are clearly defined in the UoB Quality Handbook, Procedures Manual and Partnership Agreement. The College produces a Higher Education Quality Guide for staff and a Higher Education Assessment Policy, which establishes the College's expectations of its staff in the assessment of students. Standards are set out in the specifications published by awarding bodies and the awarding organisation and their associated assessment instruments and mark schemes. Where College staff design assignment briefs, they are approved by link coordinators (UoB) or standards verifiers (Pearson). Link tutors from UoB and Pearson standards verifiers provide help and guidance as well as updates, as appropriate. External examiners confirm that the course and its component parts remain current and that the course learning outcomes remain in line with the relevant qualification descriptor and Subject Benchmark Statements. In the findings of the Higher Education Review of the UoB in June 2015, the review team considered the comprehensive arrangements in place to support collaborative partnerships to be good practice.

1.11   There is a Learning Improvement Manager (LIM) who has responsibility for all aspects of quality assurance and quality improvement planning across the College. In each Learning Area an area LIM has recently been appointed. These support the LIM by adding subject discipline and contextualisation. The review team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the 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

1.12   Responsibility for maintaining the definitive record for each programme and qualification, in the form of programme specifications, resides with the UoB as set out in the Partnership Agreement and Responsibility Checklist. For Pearson provision, the College has responsibility for producing contextualised programme specifications with reference to the definitive information provided by Pearson. Where College staff design assignment briefs, they are approved by link coordinators (UoB) or standards verifiers (Pearson), and UoB liaises directly with course teams through link coordinators. The formal responsibility, however, lies with the relevant College LAM. Overall, the evidence reviewed demonstrates arrangements to be effective and these processes would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.13   The review team evaluated the effectiveness of these arrangements by examining Pearson 2015-16 programme specifications for HNC/D Creative Media Production, HNC Computing and Systems Development and HNC/D Photography, as well as their individual unit information, along with the HNC/D Photography, HNC/D Creative Media Production and HNC Computing and System Development handbooks; the Pearson Quality Review and Assessment Report 2015 was also considered. UoB handbooks for FdA Child and Family Studies, FdA Graphic Design and Advertising, FdA Educational Practice, and PGCE/PCE programme handbooks were examined and the team discussed their availability and use with College teaching staff, students and link coordinators from UoB.

1.14   Programme specifications for Pearson provision are the responsibility of, and prepared by, the College. Each one sets out aims, skills development, programme structure, units of study with learning outcomes, criteria for admission, teaching and learning methods, assessment methods, support and guidance, and moderation of awards. Pearson programme specifications and handbooks are made available to staff and students on the College virtual learning environment (VLE). The College understands its responsibility to use programme specifications as reference points, and teaching staff are familiar with specifications and their purpose. For Pearson provision, the quality of delivery of these courses is assured internally in the same way as for other higher education courses and externally through Pearson's standards verification processes, outlined in the specifications.

1.15   UoB has a Partnership Agreement with the College and the responsibility checklist indicates that responsibility to produce the definitive record of each programme and qualification that they approve lies with the University. Handbooks contain unit lists, assessment plans including deadlines, information about appeals, and direction to the name and contact information for the relevant external examiner, published online via the College's VLE. External examiners' reports confirm that the College designs effective learning and assessment materials to meet the learning outcomes for each qualification. Compliance is monitored by the HESG via reports collated by the Higher Education Coordinator.

1.16   The College has a well-defined reporting structure for the management of higher education. Standards and quality assurance are overseen by a strategic HESG, chaired by the Vice Principal for Curriculum and Standards, which reports to the Governors' Standards Committee. The group receives summary reports in response to external examiners' reports,

along with AMRs, and monitors progress against actions. The production of the higher education SAR provides a significant addition to the quality assurance process.

1.17   Staff are expected to be familiar with, and to adhere to, the regulations of the awarding bodies and organisation conferring credit or qualification. Standards are set in the learning outcomes and unit specifications published by the awarding bodies and organisation and their associated assessment instruments and mark schemes.

1.18   Students confirm that programme specifications and handbooks are provided to them during induction and that these are also accessible on the VLE. The College website is in a period of transition and development at present, and the team observed that programme specifications are not available to prospective students and external stakeholders.

1.19   The College works closely with its awarding partners and information is made available to students in a number of ways, including handbooks devised by the University. For Pearson provision, programme specifications are available to students for all programmes. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.20   Course development and approval processes are overseen by the awarding bodies and organisation, who are also responsible for ensuring that programmes meet academic threshold standards as set out in academic frameworks, including the FHEQ and the Qualifications Credit Framework.

1.21   Members of College staff participate, at appropriate levels and stages, in both the UoB and UoN course approval processes. The College also complies with Pearson processes and procedures for course approval. In addition, the College has a programme approval process that ensures courses are viable and appropriate in meeting employer and student needs and in meeting course approval requirements.

1.22   The processes and procedures used by the awarding bodies and organisation and the systems within the College ensure that academic standards are set at a level that meets the UK threshold standards for the qualifications offered and would enable the Expectation to be met.

1.23   The review team considered College documentation relating to programme approval processes and procedures together with recent approval documentation for the UoN and met staff responsible for programme design and approval.

1.24   The review team found that the College consistently contributes to and applies, where applicable, the procedures of its awarding bodies and organisation to secure the academic standards for their awards offered at the College. Documentation relating to the new programmes validated by the UoN demonstrates that approval procedures are followed.

1.25   In summary, the College's awarding bodies and organisation provide frameworks, policies and procedures for assessment and the award of credit and qualifications that are designed to ensure UK and awarding partner standards are met, and which the College follows. The review team concludes that the Expectation is therefore met and the associated 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

1.26   For UoB programmes, the College uses the programme specifications provided by the University alongside unit information forms and handbooks to ensure that programmes are assessed according to intended learning outcomes. The UoB Collaboration Handbook and UoB's Procedures Manual for Central Bedfordshire College provide the framework and structure for assessment processes. The setting of assessments is the responsibility of UoB. First-marking and provision of feedback to students is undertaken by the College, and UoB undertakes second-marking and moderation and is responsible for convening and operating exam boards. Link coordinators from UoB work closely with College staff to ensure that correct documentation and procedures are followed and used.

1.27   For Pearson programmes, the College operates an internal verification procedure to ensure that assessment is fit for purpose before being issued to students. First-marking is conducted inside the College, with a sample internally verified and external verification being undertaken by the Pearson standards verifier during their visit(s) to the College.

1.28   The policies and procedures in place to implement the frameworks provided by UoB and Pearson in relation to achievement of learning outcomes would enable the Expectation to be met.

1.29   The team tested the Expectation through consideration of external examiner reports and the documentation underpinning assessment procedures, and held meetings with staff responsible for programme management and maintaining an overview of standards.

1.30   The College works closely with UoB, which ensures that assessment strategies and practices are robust and that the grading meets UK threshold standards. Pearson standards verifier reports also indicate that standards are being met and that the College is approved to award their qualifications. Meetings with staff demonstrated that both course teams and managers understand the requirements for monitoring of academic standards and achievement of learning outcomes.

1.31   The verification processes in place ensure that assessment is fit for purpose and that students meet programme outcomes at the required level. Time is made available each week by the College for course teams and Learning Areas to meet and undertake collaborative activity such as internal verification. Documentation to support verification is clear and is completed fully to meet awarding body and organisation requirements.

1.32   UoB and Pearson provide frameworks, policies and procedures for assessment and award of credit and qualifications that are designed to ensure that UK and awarding body and organisation standards are met, and which the College is required to follow. The College operates clear processes and procedures for satisfying these requirements, which support

students effectively to achieve programme learning outcomes. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated 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

1.33   The College is subject to the processes of monitoring and periodic review determined by UoB as part of the cyclical review and renewal of the Partnership Agreement. The College has recently completed a UoB Institutional Review, a process led by a panel of University representatives which involves the submission of a self-evaluation document and a review visit(s). Information from the College and course teams feeds into the University's processes, as appropriate, for annual monitoring and reporting.

1.34   In addition, the College has developed a process for the annual monitoring of its higher education, drawing on a range of sources which feed into the Higher Education Self-Evaluation Report. This report and the associated quality enhancement plan is moderated by a panel comprising the Vice Principal: Teaching, Learning, and Higher Education, the staff member of the College Corporation, and a student representative, prior to being reported to the College Corporation Standards Committee. The approved quality improvement plan is monitored and reviewed by the HESG and this is reported through to Governors' Standards Committee.

1.35   The policies and procedures in place for monitoring and review of programmes would enable the Expectation to be met.

1.36   The review team examined a range of documentation including the Partnership Agreement, monitoring and review documentation, as well as Pearson Standards Verifier reports, and held meetings with managers and staff.

1.37   Monitoring and review is undertaken by UoB for its programmes and support and guidance is provided by the College as required. For Pearson programmes, this is managed through the awarding organisation's quality review and development process and through external verification by the external examiners appointed by the awarding body.

1.38   In addition to awarding body and organisation processes, the College operates an internal review and monitoring process culminating in the production of an overarching Higher Education Self-Evaluation Report and quality enhancement plan. This plan is monitored by the HESG and reported to the College Corporation Standards Committee, thereby providing additional oversight of academic standards.

1.39   The College manages its responsibilities for its own monitoring and review procedures as well as those of its awarding body and organisation effectively, with appropriate scrutiny of the maintenance of academic standards. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated 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

1.40   The HESG acts as the focus for the strategic development of higher education programmes and their quality assurance. The HESG Terms of Reference facilitate the involvement of students, external examiners and Learning Areas. The HESG makes its minutes available to the Corporation Standards Committee and reports to that Committee periodically.

1.41   The review team considered a range of documentation including the Higher Education Quality Guide, Higher Education Assessment Policy, Higher Education Achievement Report, and UoB Quality Handbook. These procedures would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.42   The team found that the route taken for curriculum-planning, course validation and approval processes is clearly defined and understood by staff. The findings of the UoB Institutional Review of September 2015, the Pearson Quality Review and Development Report 2015 and UoB external examiner and Pearson standards verifier reports all confirm the appropriateness of standards.

1.43   For Pearson programmes, the Examinations Officer has delegated authority to manage registration and certification in collaboration with the course team and Lead Internal Verifier. A procedure operates to check certificates against claims prior to release, using data analysis software. Recording documentation for assessment and verification is accessed via the College intranet. A revised Assessment Policy has been ratified by the Governors to enable the College to comply with Pearson assessment and testing requirements.

1.44   For UoB programmes, the Higher Education Achievement Report gives students a permanent record of their achievements while at the University. It also provides an official record of achievements outside the course, such as awards, positions of responsibility in student societies, volunteering activities and employability skills awards. Students have lifetime access after they graduate and are provided with an official printed copy with the graduation certificate.

1.45   Course teams meet to plan, monitor and review their programmes, which are then reported to the HESG using HEAR. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

1.47   The College uses the processes of its awarding partners effectively in ensuring that academic standards are maintained in line with the relevant level of the FHEQ and external reference points.

1.48   The College's own internal processes, including rigorous programme approval and monitoring procedures, also make a valuable contribution to the maintenance of standards. There are appropriate opportunities for the use of external expertise within these processes.

1.49   The College has met all seven Expectations is this area and the associated level of risk is low. There are no recommendations. Therefore, the team concludes that the College's maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of its degree-awarding body and organisation **meets** UK expectations.

2   Judgement: The quality of student learning opportunities

Expectation (B1): Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective processes for the design, development and approval of programmes.

Quality Code, *Chapter B1: Programme Design, Development and Approval*

Findings

2.1   The College works within the frameworks and requirements of its awarding bodies and awarding organisation for course approval. The College has identified a key aim of its higher level provision as being the development of a higher education curriculum that is highly relevant and attractive to local employers and people, together with being financially resilient to support investment in growth. Within the College, curriculum planning is overseen by the Senior Management Team (SMT) and reported to the Corporation. An internal process is in place to identify and approve new programme provision, and this is signed off by a Vice Principal.

2.2   The processes and procedures in place for the design, development and approval of programmes would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.3   The review team considered documentation relating to programme approval processes and procedures together with recent approval documentation for the UoN, and met staff responsible for programme design and approval.

2.4   The College has in place an internal validation procedure for a new qualification. This procedure is based on identifying the need for the proposed course, and consideration is given to progression opportunities for Level 3 students and employer/industry needs. This approach was confirmed in meetings with managers and staff. A range of approaches is used to gain understanding of employer/industry needs, including focus groups, personal contact and membership of local employer networks. The approach adopted is a mixture of formal and informal methods and as a consequence the review team **recommends** that the College formalises a mechanism for the capture and dissemination of information about employer relationships.

2.5   In addition to identifying the need for the programme, LAMs are required to complete a Proposal for New Course form which considers course structure and resource requirements. Once the form is completed, then the procedure follows a clearly defined process resulting in approval or non-approval by the Vice Principal: Teaching, Learning and Higher Education. A course approval record is held centrally and this provides details on course fees, approval information and current validation status of the programme.

2.6   College staff, where appropriate, have been involved in the approval process relating to UoB programmes. LAMs have been working with the UoN in seeking approval to offer the FdSc in Health and Social Care and HND Business. The College has fulfilled, to date, the necessary requirements of UoB.

2.7   The choice of Pearson units is determined by the College's understanding of industry/employer need in order to provide students with the higher level vocational and generic skills for their chosen career pathway. Staff also explained how they adjust the emphasis of teaching within programmes to reflect changes in employer practices, thereby ensuring the responsiveness of the provision.

2.8   The College has appropriate arrangements in place for the design, development and approval of programmes that meet the requirements of its awarding bodies and organisation. These arrangements are also proportionate in view of the scale of the College's higher education provision and the type of programme being offered through their awarding bodies and organisation. Consideration is given to employer needs within course development; however, there is a need to formalise the method of recording and capturing employer information. This will help the College to meet the Expectation more fully. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B2): Recruitment, selection and admission policies and procedures adhere to the principles of fair admission. They are transparent, reliable, valid, inclusive and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes. They support higher education providers in the selection of students who are able to complete their programme.

Quality Code, *Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education*

Findings

2.9   The admission of prospective applicants onto a particular programme of study is the responsibility of the Vice Principal: Teaching, Learning and Higher Education and as such, authority is devolved to LAMs, teachers and Student Services and admissions staff. Prospective students can access information about the College's higher education offer via the College website or through the University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) website (for all full-time University programmes). The College is responsible for the recruitment, selection and admission to Pearson programmes, while students on UoB programmes are admitted by the awarding body.

2.10   The Admissions Policy and the Code of Practice provide the framework for higher education admissions. Both documents are reviewed and updated annually, and issued to teaching and support staff involved in the admissions process. All enquiries relating to higher education admissions are referred to Student Services. The Code of Practice governs admissions activity for all higher education provision and has been approved by the College HESG and SMT. The College has adopted sound practice and operates fair and transparent procedures for recruitment and admissions, which would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.11   The review team tested the operation and effectiveness of the recruitment, selection and admission process by considering information contained within the Admissions Policy, the draft Prospectus, the College and UCAS websites, UoB Partnership Agreement, responsibility checklists, and information available for current students by examining the induction material available on the VLE. The team also held meetings with students, academic and support staff.

2.12   Staff responsible for making selection decisions and those responsible for administering admissions have been trained in their roles, including training on equality, diversity and inclusion. Course teams make selection decisions and trained admissions staff record and administer the decisions and process enrolments, keeping data which is then monitored and reviewed by senior staff. The team did find some evidence to suggest that College staff may benefit from more training on higher education admission and registration for UoB programmes, although in recognition of this, the College proposes to draw on the services of the Higher Education Academy (HEA) and Supporting Professionalism in Admissions to strengthen its professional development and admissions practice in the coming year.

2.13   Published information about courses and studying at the College are drafted by academic staff, edited by the Higher Education Coordinator and approved by the HESG. The team heard how the College has future plans to develop an automated online application system for Pearson programmes, allowing students to self-enrol. The team heard how the College has invested in recruitment activities to enhance the availability of information and guidance to prospective students, including a teacher education evening in April 2015, attending a UCAS fair, and holding Open Days linked to a clearing hotline where students could discuss their options in person with course teams. Unfortunately, the team was disappointed to find that the prospectus for 2016-17 academic year is still in draft

format, and the Higher Education Coordinator was unable to confirm an exact timescale for its publication (see section C: Information). Having said that, there have been no student complaints or appeals about recruitment, selection or admission and students appear to be extremely happy with their experience of the process.

2.14   From speaking to students and staff the team found evidence of **good practice** relating to the impartial and inclusive nature of advice and guidance provided for students' during the recruitment process. During a meeting with support staff, the team heard how the College is focused on widening participation, actively seeking to recruit students who are capable of completing their programme of study based upon their achievements and their potential. They aim to offer individualised, one-to-one careers advice to students from non-traditional backgrounds, while students who require additional support or adjustments are guided through the process of applying for Disabled Student Allowance. The College is committed to providing impartial advice and guidance in the admissions process to assist applicants in choosing the course or programme of study that is right for them.

2.15   The College induction programme is attended by all students. For students wishing to enrol on Pearson programmes, advice and guidance is available to establish course content and the suitability of a particular programme to meet individual needs. Once a programme has been identified, individual interviews, which follow a set format common across all qualifications, are held with the course teacher. Students are issued with a course handbook and the induction process occurs over a three-week period from the start of the students' course. Students are inducted into College information, course information, Information Learning Technology, the skills and routines associated with independent learning, the purpose and outcomes of external examination and the relationship between the College and the awarding body or organisation. Learner progress is monitored and reviewed by the student monitoring platform, which is explained and introduced to students at induction. Targets are set for individual learners based on prior achievement and a regular review of progress ensures that learners are able to achieve their potential or that additional support can be introduced if not.

2.16   UoB students attend a College induction and also attend induction at the partner institution, which link tutors from the University are part of. The team found evidence that the UoB programmes have a robust interview and assessment process which has resulted in improved retention. Entry criteria for the courses have been agreed by the University during the course approval process and are described in the course information form, and it is the responsibility of the LAM at the College to ensure that these criteria are applied to applicants. Course leaders at the College verify the accuracy and authenticity of applicants' documentation. All direct enquiries for admission are administered by the Head of Student Services at the College and all full-time applicants apply via UCAS. Part-time applicants submit a University/College admission form to the Head of Student Services at the College. The Head of Admissions undertakes periodic verification of application forms and the documentation accompanying them. Where students wish to enter the course with advanced standing, the University Admissions Office considers applications in accordance with the University's published processes for the recognition of prior learning.

2.17   The College has a policy in relation to recognition of prior learning which sets out the principles and procedures; however, during a meeting with teaching staff the review team noted that no students have been admitted on this basis to date. The College values and seeks to recruit students from its diverse student community, is an Investor in People and was successfully accredited as an Investor in Diversity in March 2015. Students spoke very positively about the College's diversity, which they feel reflects the local community.

2.18   Aside from the delayed production of the College Prospectus for 2016-17, the robust, fair and transparent process ensures that the College selects and recruits students

who are able to complete their programme of study. Staff and student testimonials confirm the elements of good practice found by the team in relation to advice and guidance and the team concludes that the College works to minimise any barriers for prospective students. These activities allow the Expectation to be met, and the 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

2.19   There is a Teaching and Learning Policy for Higher Education, approved by the Governors' Standards Committee in October 2015, which sets out the strategy for learning and teaching. The College Teaching and Assessment Policy sets out a comprehensive policy and set of procedures for teacher observations and feedback. The 2011QAA Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review report gave a judgement of confidence in the College's management of responsibilities for the quality of learning opportunities offered and an action plan was produced.

2.20   The review team considered documents from the College and awarding bodies and met with groups of senior staff, academic staff, support staff and UoB link coordinators and students. This evidence would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.21   All teaching staff are appropriately qualified with recruitment and selection conforming to policy. The review team was provided with staff CVs. All teachers receive formal teaching observation by the LIM as specified in the policy. Feedback is used for professional review to plan development. Academic staff are required to undertake a minimum of 30 hours' continuing professional development each year, examples of which were provided. The College holds three staff conferences each year, including a higher education staff conference. Staff reported this to be very valuable for staff development. A recent decision has been made to support scholarship by facilitating applications for HEA Fellowship, for which staff are now applying.

2.22   The Staff Induction Policy provides information on the mission, vision and values of the College along with the main policies and procedures for delivering this. The induction process facilitates effective performance for new members of staff, who are also mentored by experienced colleagues. New academic staff members are supported by the LIM and Area LIMs.

2.23   An annual Higher Education Self Evaluation Report is produced, which acts as a focus for the analysis of information about learning and teaching. Course journals and course AMRs feed into this. Feedback is gathered from students through end-of-unit surveys, study days, student forums, the National Student Survey (NSS) and other surveys.

2.24   There has been a systematic introduction of philosophical enquiry to focus and underpin the College's approach to learning and teaching. This has embedded a particular methodological approach across all programmes to enable students to enhance the development of analytical, critical and creative skills. This methodology was clearly understood and articulated by academic staff and students and examples of its application in practice were provided.

2.25   The new buildings provide accommodation for teaching and learning. Higher education students use the new Learning Resource Centre where dedicated space for them was created as a result of student feedback. All course handbooks, Pearson specifications and UoB course information and unit information documents specify learning opportunities.

External examiner and standards verifier reports describe satisfaction with teaching and learning methods. NSS reports 100 per cent overall satisfaction for teaching and learning.

2.26   Systems operate to identify and share good practice within Learning Areas and across the College and these are facilitated by the LIM and Area LIMs. Link coordinators make regular visits and they commented that communications were good. A tutor network among partner colleges, which helps with communication and the sharing of good practice, has been established. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the 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

2.27   The College Strategic Plan identifies personal support for students as a key principle. The Higher Education Teaching and Learning Policy sets out the strategy for the implementation of the support of students. Roles and responsibilities for enabling student development and achievement and implementation of this are managed by the SMT.

2.28   The review team considered evidence in the form of College and awarding partner documents and met groups of staff and students. This evidence would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.29   Student handbooks detail the range of services available to students and show how they can be accessed. All course handbooks, Pearson specifications and UoB course information and unit information documents specify learning opportunities, and external examiner and standards verifier reports state that they are satisfied that these are met. All courses include at least one unit on effective study and professional practice, which promotes reflection on learning.

2.30   Students reported that unit specifications are given at the start of the year and that specific sessions are held to discuss what is required for assignments. UoB students confirmed that they are provided with feedback within three weeks, although students stated that some delays occur because of moderation processes at the University. For UoB programmes, assignments undergo plagiarism-detection software, which is available within the University's VLE, BREO (Bedfordshire Resources for Education Online). This assists in developing academic writing skills and helps to guard against plagiarism. Plagiarism-detection software has not yet been introduced to Pearson programmes but this is due to happen in the near future. The team was assured that other methods for preventing plagiarism are in operation. Advice on referencing is included in course handbooks.

2.31   Teachers provide detailed feedback on assessment which is used to guide the student on how to improve their work and reach their potential. Students reported that the assessment marking grid with comments mapped against marking criteria is of great assistance and that the VLE provides tips on how to improve and gain higher grades. Progress is reviewed in regular one-to-one tutorials with academic staff.

2.32   The College's student welfare team provides support and pastoral guidance to all students, including signposting to organisations that can support them further. Learning mentors have been recruited by the College to provide additional advice to identified students. There is a clear process by which initial and diagnostic assessment is used to ascertain the individual student's learning needs and the methods by which students can receive additional learning support. Employability skills are embedded in the programmes, and support from careers advisers and external agencies assists in developing these transferable skills. The College was awarded the Investors in Diversity quality mark in 2015.

2.33   The Admissions Policy confirms that the particular needs of students must be supported throughout the selection process and beyond, so applicants are asked to declare their learning needs. Students and tutors confirmed that information was provided for them at enrolment.

2.34   Students who had progressed from Level 3 to Level 4 said that preparation was very good and was a progressive process. There was an open day at UoB with sessions on referencing and study skills that were then reinforced by College tutors. For Level 3 students moving to Level 4 in Graphic Design, there was a summer assignment, assessed using a log, which acted as preparatory work. UoB link coordinators used BREO to support student transition.

2.35   Opportunities for academic progression to Level 6 programmes are clearly defined in the UoB Quality Handbook and in the Pearson Quality Review. Written guidance, interview and induction make clear to students the opportunities for transition to top-up Level 6 programmes for foundation degree students. The Partnership Operational Committee has discussed the accession of HND students to Level 6 and is in the process of formulating policy.

2.36   The College's careers officers support the progression of students onto higher education programmes, give impartial advice by phone, email or face-to-face to external candidates, and support career development and progression into further learning or employment. Progression is supported by course teams, working with the Partnership Office of the University, which arranges tasters and progression days.

2.37   In the NSS 2015, 96 per cent of students said that they had sufficient support with their studies. The recent matrix Accreditation Report commended the whole-College, coordinated approach to the provision of information, advice and guidance. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the 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

2.38   The College's formal processes are outlined within a Student Engagement Policy. There are clear processes to ensure that higher education students are involved in the deliberative structure, strategic development, quality assurance and enhancement of student experience. As well as the Higher Education Student Governor representation on the Governors' Standards Committee and a student representative sitting on the HESG, student feedback and learner voice is collected in a number of ways, including end-of-unit surveys, Student Council, higher education student forums, course team meetings, programme meetings, UoB study days and the NSS.

2.39   Higher education student engagement is seen by the College as an essential and ongoing aspect of continuous quality improvement, and an important aspect of College life.

2.40   The HESG is the conduit for the involvement of students, partners, the Corporation and the Learning Areas in the strategic development of higher education and its quality assurance. In 2015 the HESG considered how best to ensure that students are engaged in the ongoing design of the curriculum and the student experience, as well as ensuring that feedback is heard. This reflection led to a student representative joining the group in April 2015. Although only recently implemented, the participation of students in quality enhancement and quality assurance processes would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.41   The team met students, teaching staff, support staff, senior management and UoB link tutors. The team examined documents including the NSS results, the Student Engagement Policy, minutes from HESG, Governors' Standards Committee, and programme-level and course team meetings. Examples of end-of-unit surveys were provided to the team, including HNC/D Photography and Child and Family Studies, and reflection on these is documented in the AMRs for each programme of study, such as the PGCE/Cert Ed.

2.42   The College values student contribution and has stated its intention to consult with higher education students in the development of a new Higher Education Strategy for 2016-19. Furthermore, it has updated the HESG Terms of Reference to make a student a permanent member of the committee. It is the College's intention that higher education student representatives sit on the following College committees: Corporation, Governors' Standards Committee, Health and Safety Committee and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee. The revised Terms of Reference of the HESG task it with monitoring student engagement and the action plans arising from it. These developments in formalising student engagement at a strategic level lead the team to **affirm** the recent steps taken to involve students in decisions that impact on the enhancement of their educational experience.

2.43   Opportunities for engagement are communicated to students as part of their induction; however, the Induction Checklist in its current format does not clearly state the role of course representatives, Student Council, Higher Education Governor or membership of any committees. Each course elects a student representative who acts for the group at cross-College meetings, in particular the Student Council, and who are also present at course team meetings. The contribution of student representatives is recorded in the minutes of team meetings and reviewed by the HESG. As noted with the Higher Education Quality Enhancement Plan 2015, outcomes of consultations with students at programme

level are collated within course journals, reported to the HESG as they arise during the annual cycle, and documented within the AMRs. Course journals are also used to share good practice within the College.

2.44   The Student Council is the College's main vehicle for communicating the views of students directly to the College's SMT and directly influencing decision making in the College. Through their involvement in the Student Council, higher education student representatives are consulted on College policies that inform the running of higher education programmes, the deployment of resources for higher education students, support for higher education students, and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment on higher education programmes. From reviewing minutes of the HESG, the team found a recommendation to deliver formal training to student representatives; however, during a meeting with students the team did not find evidence of any student representatives having received training apart from the Higher Education Student Governor.

2.45   The College also elicits the views of students through a series of internal and external surveys and group meetings, including end of unit surveys, the NSS, the higher education student forum, focus groups and face-to-face tutorials. Students can join the UoB's Students' Union. Pearson programme students are able to complete online surveys twice yearly, and feedback is collected during the lesson observation process at course level. Their views are seen as an integral part of the quality review process and Student Voice representatives are included in meetings held by senior managers and governors. The team found evidence that students are involved in the observation of teaching staff, forming part of the interview process for the appointment of new academic staff. During a meeting with students, the team was provided with various examples of how student feedback (both formal and informal) had resulted in action by the College in direct response to student requests. It was evident to the team that partnership working occurs naturally due to small class sizes, as well as close and mature relationships fostered within an environment that maintains a mutual respect between staff and students.

2.46   The review team found the arrangements that the College already has in place to be effective in practice and the College is demonstrably committed to improving and developing its arrangements for student engagement by taking deliberate steps at both an individual and collective level. Therefore, the level of risk is low and the Expectation is met.

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

2.47   Underpinning the College's approach to the assessment of higher education students is the Higher Education Policy and Higher Education Staff Quality Guide. This policy was written in the context of the awarding body and organisation assessment regulations and the Quality Code. The document sets out the purpose of assessment, the performance expected of staff in undertaking assessment and the importance of timely feedback.

2.48   Processes and procedures are in place relating to the setting of assessments, marking, moderation, and award of credit and qualification that meet the requirements of UoB and Pearson.

2.49   Students are made aware of assessment requirements through student handbooks, course information forms and unit information forms that are available online. Academic writing skills are developed within course programmes and plagiarism detection software is used by UoB. Processes are in place for managing academic misconduct, mitigating circumstances and the recognition of prior learning.

2.50   The systems in place for the management of assessment and opportunities for the achievement of learning outcomes would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.51   The team reviewed a range of documentary evidence linked to the application and assessment process and procedures, including handbooks, course and unit information forms, exam board minutes and external examiner reports. The procedures demonstrated how assessments are managed and checked and outcomes agreed, including through examination and assessment boards. Meetings with staff and students demonstrated an understanding of assessment procedures and how these operate and are monitored.

2.52   The College complies fully with the assessment requirements of UoB relating to setting of assessment, moderation, marking and reporting. Staff confirm their understanding of the processes involved and the link tutors present at the staff meeting concurred with their views. UoB external examiner reports confirm the integrity of the assessment processes used.

2.53   The College has clear articulated processes for the planning and delivery of assessment within Pearson courses. These processes are built around Pearson guidance for higher level programmes. Pearson standards verifier reports confirm the appropriateness of the assessment management processes in place, the systems for ensuring the comparability of grading decisions made, and the recording of outcomes.

2.54   In addition, the College has a Higher Education Assessment Strategy that sets out the principles of assessment and the framework by which this is undertaken, and this is also reinforced in the Higher Education Quality Manual. Staff new to assessment are provided with support in order to ensure that they understand the processes involved and mark to the required standard.

2.55   Unit information forms for both UoB and Pearson programmes provide details of learning outcomes, assessment criteria and the schedule of assessment activity. Assignment briefs follow a standard layout within programmes and there is clear linking of learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Assessments are realistic and opportunities are provided through working with employers and organisations to provide live briefs. These contextualised assessments also provide the opportunity for wider learning relating to professional conduct and employability. This was reinforced at the meetings held with staff, students and employers.

2.56   Academic writing skills are developed within the programmes offered, together with support available through the library services at UoB and the College. Academic writing and study resources are also available on the University and College VLEs. Students are aware of plagiarism and the penalties associated with academic malpractice. Plagiarism-detection software is used by UoB and students are aware of this. Students on Pearson programmes were equally aware of plagiarism, and staff employ a range of strategies to detect plagiarism, especially infringement of copyright within photography and media courses. The College plans to make plagiarism-detection software available for its Pearson programmes and the review team **recommends** that the College ensures that plagiarism-detection software is applied to all programmes.

2.57   Students are made aware of assessment requirements through course and module/unit documentation and the VLE. Feedback is provided through standard structure templates that meet awarding body and organisation requirements. Students are aware of assessment requirements and appreciative of the feedback given in supporting their learning. Access to performance recording software is also available to students and this provides information on their achievement and progress.

2.58   Processes and procedures are in place for mitigating circumstances and extensions. Staff explained how these are applied depending on the awarding body or organisation's requirements and students confirmed they are aware of what to do if circumstances arise relating to meeting an assessment deadline. The College has a Recognition of Prior Learning Policy although, to date, this has not been applied.

2.59   UoB has clearly articulated processes and procedures for the award of credit, referrals and deferrals and staff participate in field and examination boards. College staff also participate in the Assessment Board for Pearson programmes held by the College. There are clear terms of reference and guidelines, in line with awarding organisation guidelines, for this Board and the Vice Principal: Teaching and Learning acts as the independent chair.

2.60   The processes and procedures in place and used by the College to deliver and manage assessment ensure that this is undertaken equitably and consistently and enable students to achieve their intended learning outcomes for the credit or qualification being sought. Processes are in place for the management of plagiarism; however, the use of plagiarism-detection software is not yet fully deployed across Pearson programmes and this needs to be undertaken. This will help the College to meet the Expectation more fully. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the 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

2.61   The process and criteria for the appointment of external examiners, and definition of their roles, is set out in the UoB Quality Handbook. External examiners and Pearson standards verifiers comment in their reports on the validity of assessment instruments and the accuracy of the application of mark schemes. They judge and report on the rigour of internal standardisation and verification. External examiner and standards verifier reports are discussed by course teams, and action plans are devised and monitored by the Quality Improvement Manager and LAM as well as through reporting by the HESG. This group receives summary reports in response to external examiners' reports, along with AMRs, and monitors progress against actions. A summary of actions is incorporated in the higher education SAR and responses are sent to the University and external examiners. In the case of UoB programmes, cross and double-marking is supervised by the Link Coordinator. These processes are published in course documentation (Course Information Form/Unit Information Form - UoB) and specifications (Pearson), including arrangements for recognition of prior learning, special arrangements and extenuating circumstances.

2.62   The review team considered documentary evidence in the form of external examiner and standards verifier reports and minutes of examination board meetings, held meetings with senior staff, academic staff, students, support staff and link tutors and received a briefing on the VLE. These procedures would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.63   External examiners and standards verifiers have been appointed to all of the programmes running in collaboration between the College and UoB and Pearson. External examiner and standards verifier reports confirm that assessment is rigorous, equitable, valid and reliable. The College documentation states that external examiners' reports are made available annually in student handbooks. The review team did not see external examiners' reports in any of the student handbooks provided for UoB programmes or Pearson programmes; however, the reports are available for all programmes on the VLE.

2.64   The review team found that the comments provided in external examiner reports were generic in nature. This results from external examiners covering multiple programmes and/or programmes that are delivered across a number of centres. The report for the PGCE covers nine centres and that for Graphic Design covers four centres. The external examiner report form does provide space and an invitation to make individual group comparisons as well as comparisons between centres and programmes; however, apart from a small number of instances, this opportunity has not been taken up. The lack of specificity was acknowledged by academic staff and the review team was assured that additional feedback is provided by external examiners directly to College staff at interim visits and by email and that the link coordinators acted as a conduit for these additional specific comments. Standards verifier reports, being centre-specific, are not problematic in this respect. Interim meetings with standards verifiers took place and a close relationship with regular dialogue has been established.

2.65   Details of the process by which external examiner reports are received and acted upon was provided. Examples of how external examiners' reports are made available to academic staff and students have been provided for both Pearson and UoB programmes. Evidence of examination board meetings shows that opportunities for external examiner feedback are provided and a clear and robust set of procedures was demonstrated. Examples of responses to standards verifier and external examiner comments were

provided. As a result of external examiner comments and the work of the Link Coordinator, groups have been set up to work on producing consistency of assessment across various centres offering the same programme. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated 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

2.66   The College has processes in place for the annual monitoring of higher education courses. Each programme produces a course AMR that feeds into the Learning Area SAR, and a Higher Education Self-Evaluation Report is produced drawing on these documents and other sources of information. The higher education SAR and the resulting quality enhancement plan is reported to the College Corporation Standards Committee.

2.67   The College participates, as appropriate, in the UoB annual monitoring and reporting procedures for the programmes offered through the University. In 2014-15, the College was subject to a UoB periodic review and was re-approved as an associate partner of the University for a period of five years. The College is subject to centre monitoring by Pearson and the 2015 visit concluded that all quality processes are in place and effective.

2.68   The arrangements for the regular and systematic processes for the monitoring and review of programmes would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.69   The review team examined documentation arising from the operation of programme monitoring and review and met managers and staff. The team also considered documentation from the awarding body and organisation.

2.70   The Vice Principal: Teaching, Learning and Higher Education is the senior manager responsible for higher education and is supported by the LAM: Access and Higher Education and the LIM. The Vice Principal chairs the HESG, which has the overarching remit of monitoring and advising on the quality of learning, teaching and assessment in prescribed higher education against the expectations and indicators of the Quality Code and of securing student engagement in the higher education quality assurance of the College. This group receives information from a range of sources including student feedback, external examiner reports and the higher education SAR. The HESG reports to the College Corporation Standards Committee.

2.71   Monitoring and review reports follow a defined structure depending on the type of report being produced. In overview, the reports cover consideration of the outcomes of the previous quality enhancement plan; course data; recruitment, selection, admissions and induction; learning and teaching; assessment; student feedback; and the quality enhancement plan for the forthcoming academic year. College managers and staff were aware of their role within the College's monitoring and review process.

2.72   Course journals are maintained across all higher education programmes and staff identified this process as a valuable tool in recording matters relating to course management and acting as the basis of feeding into AMRs. A review of the course journals available to the team confirmed this.

2.73   Course AMRs are prepared by programme teams and these draw on course journals, external examiner and student feedback. LAMs review the course AMRs for their area and these feed into the Learning Area SARs.

2.74   A higher education SAR is produced centrally, by the LAM: Access and Higher Education, and draws on the course AMRs and the Learning Area SARs in order to provide

a cross-College evaluation of higher education. The higher education SAR is moderated by the Vice Principal: Teaching, Learning and Higher Education, the teaching staff member of the College Corporation and a student representative. The SAR is reported to the HESG and the resulting quality enhancement plan is monitored by this group. In addition, the higher education SAR is presented to the College Corporation Standards Committee and signed off by this committee.

2.75   The College was subject to a UoB periodic review in 2014-15. The review provided an opportunity for the College to reflect on its higher education provision and documentation in light of feedback from the University. Stage 3 of the periodic review process resulted in a set of conditions that were fulfilled by the College and, as a consequence, the University re-approved the College as an associate partner for a period of five years.

2.76   The College's higher education monitoring and review processes are comprehensive and enable appropriate actions to be taken at course, Learning Area and cross-College level. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints*

Findings

2.77   Overall responsibility for the Complaints Procedure lies with the College Principal, and day-to-day responsibility for implementation of the complaints procedure lies with the Learning Improvement Department and the LIM. The LIM records, monitors and reports on all complaints received by the Governors' Standards Committee on a termly basis. The College has an Appeals on Grading Procedure document, an Assessment Malpractice Policy and a Customer Care - Complaints Policy/Procedure. For UoB students, matters relating to complaints and non-academic grievances are dealt with under the College Student Complaints and Grievance Policy, which is managed and administered by the LIM, with details of complaints being notified to the University Link Tutor. The University's Link Tutor monitors the overall number of complaints raised and follows these up where required. The College's procedures and adherence to the arrangements of its awarding bodies and organisation would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.78   The team tested the effectiveness of the College's policies and procedures by examining documentation including records of informal complaints, HESG and Governors' Standards committee minutes, course handbooks, course journals, AMRs, the UoB Partnership Agreement and responsibility checklists. The team also held meetings with students, support staff, academic staff, senior management, link tutors and employers.

2.79   There have been no higher education complaints or appeals in the last five years and therefore no comment can be made on their fair or timely handling. The team is unable to comment on the effectiveness of policies or procedures, but from reviewing documentary evidence and speaking to students and staff the team considers the College values and ethos to be based upon principles of equality and diversity, which in turn foster good relations. The College works hard to safeguard the interests and wellbeing of students and has designed policies and implemented them in a way which is fair and transparent. Students informed the team of their knowledge and understanding of the appeals and complaints procedures. They feel comfortable in speaking informally in the first instance with College staff to resolve issues before needing to escalate them further into formal proceedings. While no formal complaints have been made, students commented that they are not surprised, due to the various opportunities they have to give feedback at course level.

2.80   The College outlines the complaints and appeals process and timescales clearly. The College aims to deal with all complaints within 10 working days or as soon as possible and complainants are kept informed of the reason for any delay. The College keeps a log of all informal complaints and suggestions made at the Higher Education Forum. All staff have a responsibility to try to resolve informal complaints prior to invoking the Complaints Procedure, to forward formal complaints to the Learning Improvement Department and LIM and to inform students of the Complaints Procedure. The College is meeting the requirements of the Office of the independent Adjudicator (OIA). A new College website is in the process of being launched and a hotline number and email address for higher education enquiries is in operation for the days of the transition. Once the website is fully operational the Appeals and Complaints Procedure will be publicly available.

2.81   The College uses the induction period and the course handbooks to inform learners of the College's policy on malpractice and the penalties for attempted and actual incidents of malpractice. It is the responsibility of the Principal or Assistant Principal to carry out an investigation into allegations of malpractice. Handbooks and induction introduce students to their right to raise concerns, including formal appeals and complaints, although the team did notice some inconsistency, with the HNC/D Photography Handbook not including this information. The College provides students with opportunities to raise matters of concern in various ways. Students are represented on College committees including HESG, they consult with external examiners during their visits, they complete end-of-unit surveys, and both the Higher Education Coordinator and Quality Improvement Manager are available to receive feedback from students.

2.82   Students are also able to raise a formal complaint directly with the University using the University's Student Complaints Procedure if they are not satisfied with the way in which their complaint has been handled by the College, or if the complaint is about the University. For University students, the handbooks are published on BREO and key points are outlined at induction. The University's final responsibility for resolving these matters is made clear, alongside its procedures for doing so. Policy, procedural forms and handbooks are submitted.

2.83   For Pearson provision, the Assessment Appeals and Malpractice policies are published on the College intranet, accessible to all staff. During induction, students acknowledge that they are aware of what constitutes malpractice and the consequences that will follow when discovered. They also know how they can appeal an assessment decision and the process to follow should they need to do so. To date the College has had no incidents of malpractice that required reporting to Pearson but it is aware that this should initially be via the Regional Quality Manager.

2.84   Overall, the team found that the processes for academic appeals and student complaints work effectively. The College's procedures and adherence to the arrangements of its awarding partners enable the Expectation to be met, and the level of risk is low due to the comprehensive formal policies and procedures as set out in written documents, and the arrangements available to students to raise matters of concern.

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

2.85   The College does not enter into any financial arrangements with other organisations; there are no financial risks and due diligence arrangements are not required. Although other organisations provide learning opportunities and the opportunity for students and their staff to produce evidence for assessment, staff from other organisations are not involved directly in assessment and so there is no risk to the security of the award of credit. No responsibility for assessment is devolved to providers of work-based learning or to employers.

2.86   Course teams work with employers to recruit students, to receive advice on the curriculum and to provide work-based learning and placements. The College has taken deliberate steps to standardise its approach to these relationships between courses and Learning Areas. The arrangements for enhancing learning opportunities and managing risk are embodied in the Work-based Learning and Placement Policy, which sets out the arrangements for work-based learning to take place with employers and the expectations therein.

2.87   At the meeting with employers it was confirmed that they play no part in assessment of students. They found the Work-based Learning and Placement Policy to be very helpful in preparing for and carrying out placements. The students were said to be well prepared and knowledgeable about work expectations and expectations of appropriate behaviour in the workplace. This view of preparedness was corroborated in the meeting with students. Employers value the close relationship and support of College tutors during placements. Additional information on work-based learning is provided in individual programme handbooks, which set out the processes and procedures involved. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the 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

2.88   The College does not award research degrees.

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.89   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. All of the Expectations in this area were met and the associated level of risk was low in each case. The team identified two features of good practice and one affirmation in this area. There are two recommendations.

2.90   The features of good practice identified the impartial and inclusive nature of advice and guidance provided for students during the recruitment process and the introduction of philosophical enquiry as a methodology across all programmes to enhance student capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking. The affirmation in this area concerned the recent steps taken to involve students in decisions that impact on the enhancement of their educational experience.

2.91   The College has a range of employability initiatives and these make positive contributions to the student experience. However, the tracking of employer information has been more focused at programme level to date. The team therefore recommends that the College formalises a mechanism for the capture and dissemination of information about employer relationships.

2.92   The second recommendation concerns the opportunities for students to access plagiarism-detection software. Currently, plagiarism-detection software can only be accessed by UoB students. The team recommends that this software is applied to all programmes by September 2016.

2.93   The team concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities at Central Bedfordshire 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 publishes information that describes its mission, values and overall strategy in the Strategic Plan, which is made available to partners and stakeholders. There is a Public Information Policy which makes roles and responsibilities for the fitness for purpose, accessibility and trustworthiness of information clear. Information about higher education provision is primarily made available to intended audiences through the College website, UoB website, BREO, the Higher Education Prospectus, the College VLE, and open days. The College produces information for prospective students and the public, including details of available courses, the admissions process, fees and the support available. For current students, information is available in course handbooks, programme specifications, and course materials, all of which are available on the College VLE, or BREO for UoB students. The College sets out its arrangements for managing academic standards and quality assurance and enhancement and describes the data and information used to support its implementation in the Higher Education Staff Quality Guide. The College's processes would allow the Expectation to be met.

3.2 The team tested the effectiveness of the process by reviewing the College website, VLE, draft prospectus, course handbooks, programme specifications and minutes of meetings. The team also held meetings with students, senior staff, teaching and support staff and employers.

3.3 Although currently in draft format, the Higher Education Prospectus includes information about the College, its location and facilities. Additionally, it gives details about the content of programmes, how they are taught and assessed and the resources, support, information, advice and guidance that students can expect. It also signposts students to the Admissions Policy and Complaints and Appeals Policy, which will also be made available on the College website once the transition is finalised. To enable informed student choice, the College should consider introducing an annual timetable or similar publication cycle to prevent future delays. The team therefore **recommends** that the College ensures a systematic approach to the timely production of accessible public information.

3.4 Oversight of the website rests with the Marketing Manager and PR. A review of the College website found that programme specifications and higher education policies are not currently available to the public or prospective students, and the team heard from the Higher Education Coordinator that the website is in a process of transition. The College is aware of the temporary lack of higher education course information and is working to resolve these issues as quickly as possible. Students and staff whom the team met were very positive about the information available for them on the VLE. The VLE contains some helpful resources for staff, which include guidance on supporting students with additional needs. Information available for students on the VLE includes course handbooks, qualification and unit structure, assessment schedules, assignment briefs, readings lists, response from Unit Survey Reports, course materials and external examiner reports.

3.5   The College holds the matrix Quality Standard for the quality of information, advice and guidance it offers. The LAM ensures that teaching staff are trained on the use of the VLE to enable them to add online activities, which are appropriately structured. The LIM moderates the minimum specification and usage of the VLE via unit surveys and the lesson observation process. The College sees Learning Area Team Times as an important communications tool and an essential part of higher education operations. Team Times provides a forum for staff development as required, and for communication with higher education staff from other Learning Areas. The College intranet is the gateway to communication between the College and its higher education staff. All policy documents relating to the work and working practices of the College are maintained on the College intranet. The Higher Education Operations Manual is located in the Higher Education tab on the College intranet, and in the higher education tab in the staff area on the VLE. The manual provides information to higher education staff on how to carry out their roles and responsibilities in terms of learning, teaching, assessment, and support for students.

3.6   Course information is reviewed annually and signed off by LAMs. There is a course handbook for each programme of study. The content of Pearson course handbooks follows a similar format. Handbooks are reviewed annually by course teams and outcomes recorded in the College Annual Monitoring Review. Feedback on fitness for purpose is collected at the Student Forum. Course teams can and do seek advice from the LIM on the quality of their handbooks. Handbooks contain information about course content, assessment, the quality assurance of assessment and schedules for assessment. They are available in hard copy and online through the University and College VLEs. Guidance on plagiarism is contained in Student Handbooks. The content of University course handbooks is directed by the University. UoB students can access BREO, which includes the University's VLE and a range of materials and resources. The programme handbooks provide this information and give a link to access BREO directly. Students also have access to the University's Student Record System to review personal and academic records.

3.7   Overall, the College's process for producing information about its higher education provision is appropriate. However, there is a weakness in the delayed publication of the 2016-17 Higher Education Prospectus and the ongoing transition and updating of the College website. This leads the team to make a recommendation concerning the need to ensure a systematic approach to the timely production of accessible public information. Despite the recommendation, the team concludes that the College has appropriate processes for checking that information is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy and therefore the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low. The level of risk is low because the action needed to address this weakness will not require or result in major structural, operational or procedural change.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

3.8   In reaching its judgement relating to the quality of information about learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook. There is one recommendation in this area based on the College adopting a systematic approach to the timely production of accessible public information.

3.9   The College has systems to enable student feedback to be gathered and uses these to contribute to its action planning. The College has therefore responded to student feedback relating to the accessibility of higher education resources and the communication of course changes and guidance, and has mechanisms to monitor whether actions taken will be effective during the 2015-16 academic year. Most students are satisfied with the information they have received from the pre-course stage onwards.

3.10   The review team concludes that the quality of the information about learning opportunities at Central Bedfordshire 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 has a clear strategic direction for its higher education and has taken a number of deliberate steps to progress this. In particular, the establishment of the HESG, which meets every five weeks and which is aligned with the Higher Education Quality Calendar, is central to this progress. The Group has representation from the SMT, curriculum, resources, students, employers and the Corporation. The College's annual monitoring and review reporting draws on a range of information sources, including student feedback, and the reports produced include quality enhancement plans. The higher education SAR and resulting quality enhancement plan is reported to the College Corporation Standards Committee and the quality enhancement plan, monitored by the HESG.

4.2 The College's commitment to enhancement, the monitoring and review reporting process and procedures in place, and the quality enhancement plans produced would enable the Expectation to be met.

4.3 The review team met staff and students to discuss their understanding of enhancement and the approaches used to identify opportunities for improvements to programmes and learning opportunities for higher education students. A range of documents was also reviewed, including minutes of meetings alongside AMRs and quality enhancement plans. The team was also provided with examples of improvements made in response to student feedback, including improved resources for the photography provision and an area for higher education students in the newly opened Learning Resource Centre.

4.4 The commitment to the enhancement of the students' learning experience was articulated clearly in the meetings held with the Principal, managers, support and teaching staff. Students were also able to identify ways in which the College has enhanced their experience, both at a programme and on a wider level.

4.5 The College allocates a half day per week for 'team time'. This is an opportunity for Learning Areas to meet and carry out aspects of programme management requiring discussion and collaborative input. In addition, time is allocated for sharing good practice both within the Learning Area and across the College. This is supported by staff within each Learning Area, who act as Learning Area LIMs. These staff, although reporting directly to a LAM, are also members of a cross-College group coordinated by the LIM. This, in turn, provides opportunities to share good practice, from activities such as lesson observation and higher education staff conferences, both horizontally and vertically within the College.

4.6 Philosophical enquiry is a cross-College initiative that was introduced to develop the critical questioning and enquiry skills of students at all levels of the College. Staff teaching on higher education have used the skills developed through philosophical enquiry training to encourage the higher level thinking abilities of their students. Students whom the team met were aware of philosophical enquiry and how opportunities had been taken in class to explore wider ethical and social issues. Examples of this include ethical hacking, parental influences, and homelessness.

4.7 The College was able to provide other examples of enhancement, including the purchase of IT equipment and cameras for photography and the provision of a designated

higher education space in the Learning Resource Centre. The photography equipment purchase was driven by teaching staff identifying the need for students to be able to reinforce learning by using editing software and cameras after practical demonstrations. The Learning Area Manager: Sport, Public Service and Media made the case for this development to the HESG and the decision was taken to support the purchase of this equipment.

4.8   The College's new Learning Resource Centre was opened in September 2015. Feedback was sought from all students on the new facility, and higher education students identified a need for an area to access online resources and work collaboratively in small groups. A proposal to provide a dedicated room for higher education students' use was taken to the HESG and was approved. This facility has been well used by students and enhanced in February 2016 by the addition of a desktop computer. Both of these enhancements have been reported to the College Corporation Standards Committee.

4.9   In spring 2014, the HESG established a Student Opportunity Fund to enhance the experiences of higher education students. This fund has been used to support a residential weekend to help FdA Children and Family Studies students make the transition from Level 4 to Level 5. The funding allocated was £100 per student and this allowed students who otherwise could not afford this activity to take part. The outcome of the residential weekend was that students felt more confident in undertaking their Level 5 study.

4.10   The HESG forms a focal point from which deliberate steps are taken to enhance the quality of the student learning experience. This group provides a forum for discussing areas of improvement, considering feedback from staff and students and drawing on information from the monitoring and review reporting process. Examples were provided of enhancing higher education resources and facilities together with developing the high level skills of students. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

4.11   In reaching its judgement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook. The team identified one feature of good practice in this area, namely the introduction of philosophical enquiry as a methodology across all programmes to enhance student capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking. There are no recommendations identified in this area.

4.12   The College takes a strategic approach to the enhancement of student learning opportunities. Enhancement initiatives are identified and implemented in a systematic manner across the College. There are clear mechanisms for sharing good practice and numerous examples of the positive impact of these mechanisms. The team also notes the College's effective engagement with the student body to assure and enhance its provision.

4.13   The review team concludes that the enhancement of student learning opportunities at Central Bedfordshire College **meets** UK expectations.

5 Commentary on the Theme: Student Employability

Findings

5.1 The College states in its Strategic Plan and Higher Education Strategy that vocational programmes and employability are key principles. The Higher Education Teaching and Learning Policy sets out how employability skills development is delivered. As a result of this strategy the decision was made to offer foundation degrees and Higher National awards, due to their vocational emphasis, and in the light of labour market intelligence from employers and partners. Approximately 70 per cent of the current student cohort is in employment relevant to the subject of their course, with 30 per cent having progressed from Level 3, mostly within the College.

5.2 Course development and choices are informed by employers, alumni and local businesses. Pearson programmes were chosen because of their vocational nature and links to employment. Employability is embedded in the curriculum design and assessment of all higher education courses. Every programme has at least one unit that addresses and assesses employability skills. Assessment of these units is at least partially by reflection on work-based practice. Programme handbooks set out the skills and learning opportunities that potentially increase employability, and where students can engage in these. Placements and work-based learning are areas for development of employability skills. A comprehensive guide to work-based learning and placement is provided for students with additional information provided in individual programme handbooks. Employers found the Work-based Learning Policy to be very helpful in preparing for, and carrying out, placements. The students were said to be well prepared and knowledgeable about work expectations and appropriate behaviour in the workplace. This view of preparedness was corroborated in the meeting with students.

5.3 Employers advise on curriculum development and assessment through employer forums, convened by the Learning Areas. Employers visit as speakers and host visits from groups of students. Course teams work with employers to recruit students, to receive advice on the curriculum and to provide work-based learning and placements. The College has established Higher Education Employer Forums. These are run by the LAMs and employers are consulted in terms of course design and delivery. In some areas this is an ad hoc process based on employer terms. Employers deliver masterclasses, conduct mock interviews, provide advice and guidance and present recent live case studies. For Child and Family Studies, the Employers' Forum meets once a term and the review team was provided with a delegate list, agenda and notes. Employers seem to be identified on an individual basis via tutor links or personal contacts. The creation of a database of contacts and information about employers may be useful for sharing across programmes and also for preventing duplication. Close relationship and support by College tutors had been established, which employers valued.

5.4 The College has its own Enterprise Unit, which enables teams of students from higher education and further education to take on live projects. The College's careers officers are part of the Student Services team; they support the progression of students onto higher education programmes, give impartial advice and support career development and progression into further learning or employment. The great majority of the College's higher education students progress to a top-up year at UoB, whether they have come through the University's own foundation degrees or via Pearson Higher Nationals. This progression is supported by course teams, working with the Partnership Office of the University, which arranges tasters and progression days. The focus of these events is the enhancement in employability to be gained from a full degree.

5.5   As well as progressing into employment or further study, the College's students also progress at work, with many students being promoted within their current job roles.

5.6   Students stated that they believe their courses have developed their employability skills and produced a much more professional approach to work. Work-based programmes are seen to be inherent in the courses they are studying and employability is an intrinsic part of everything they study. In 2015 all of the College's higher education students progressed either to further study, to employment, to self-employment or to promotion at work.

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 30 to 33 of the Higher Education Review handbook.

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

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

Academic standards
The standards set by **degree-awarding bodies** for their courses (programmes and modules) and expected for their awards. See also **threshold academic standard**.

Award
A qualification, or academic credit, conferred in formal recognition that a student has achieved the intended **learning outcomes** and passed the assessments required to meet the academic standards set for a **programme** or unit of study.

Blended learning
Learning delivered by a number of different methods, usually including face-to-face and e-learning (see **technology enhanced or enabled learning**).

Credit(s)
A means of quantifying and recognising learning, used by most institutions that provide higher education **programmes of study**, expressed as numbers of credits at a specific level.

Degree-awarding body
A UK higher education provider (typically a university) with the power to award degrees, conferred by Royal Charter, or under Section 76 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, or under Section 48 of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992, or by Papal Bull, or, since 1999, granted by the Privy Council on advice from QAA (in response to applications for taught degree awarding powers, research degree awarding powers or university title).

Distance learning
A course of study that does not involve face-to-face contact between students and tutors but instead uses technology such as the internet, intranets, broadcast media, CD-ROM and video, or traditional methods of correspondence - learning 'at a distance'.
See also **blended learning**.

Dual award or double award
The granting of separate awards (and certificates) for the same **programme** by two **degree-awarding bodies** who have jointly delivered the programme of study leading to them. See also **multiple award**.

e-learning
See technology enhanced or enabled learning.

Enhancement
The process by which higher education providers systematically improve the quality of provision and the ways in which students' learning is supported. It is used as a technical term in our review processes.

Expectations
Statements in the **Quality Code** that set out what all UK higher education providers expect of themselves and each other, and what the general public can therefore expect of them.

Flexible and distributed learning
A programme or module that does not require the student to attend classes or events at particular times and locations.
See also **distance learning**.

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

Framework for higher education qualifications
A published formal structure that identifies a hierarchy of national qualification levels and describes the general achievement expected of holders of the main qualification types at each level, thus assisting higher education providers in maintaining academic standards. QAA publishes the following frameworks: *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and *The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland* (FQHEIS).

Good practice
A process or way of working that, in the view of a QAA review team, makes a particularly positive contribution to a higher education provider's management of academic standards and the quality of its educational provision. It is used as a technical term in QAA's audit and review processes.

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

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

Multiple awards
An arrangement where three or more **degree-awarding bodies** together provide a single jointly delivered **programme** (or programmes) leading to a separate **award** (and separate certification) of each awarding body. The arrangement is the same as for **dual/double awards**, but with three or more awarding bodies being involved.

Operational definition
A formal definition of a term, establishing exactly what QAA means when using it in reviews and reports.

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

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

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

Quality Code
Short term for the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which is the UK-wide set of **reference points** for higher education providers (agreed through consultation with the higher education community, and published by QAA), which states the **Expectations** that all providers are required to meet.

Reference points
Statements and other publications that establish criteria against which performance can be measured.

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

Technology enhanced or enabled learning (or **e-learning**)
Learning that is delivered or supported through the use of technology.

Threshold academic standard
The minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for an academic **award**. Threshold academic standards are set out in the national **frameworks** and **Subject Benchmark Statements**.

Virtual learning environment (VLE)
An intranet or password-only interactive website (also referred to as a platform or user interface) giving access to **learning opportunities** electronically. These might include such resources as course handbooks, information and reading lists; blogs, message boards and forums; recorded lectures; and/or facilities for online seminars (webinars).

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