Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) of Christ the Redeemer College

Partial review

November 2016

Contents

About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education (Alternative Providers) partial review conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Christ the Redeemer College. The review took place on 21 November 2016 and was conducted by a team of two reviewers, as follows:

- Professor Hilary Grainger
- Dr Richard Samuels.

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provided by Christ the Redeemer 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.

This was a partial review following an original review undertaken in June 2016, which resulted in the following published report. The QAA review team made judgements on one area requiring improvement - the enhancement of student learning opportunities.

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

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

A summary of the findings can be found in the section starting on page 2. Explanations of the findings are given in numbered paragraphs in the section starting on page 5.

The QAA website gives more information about QAA and its mission.[2] A dedicated section explains the method for Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers).[3] For an explanation of terms see the glossary at the end of this report.

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[1] The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at: www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code
[2] QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us.
[3] Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers):
www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/RSCD.aspx

Key findings

QAA's judgements about Christ the Redeemer College

The QAA review team formed the following judgement about the higher education provision at Christ the Redeemer College.

- The enhancement of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

Affirmation of action being taken

The QAA review team **affirms** the following action that the Christ the Redeemer College is already taking to make academic standards secure and/or improve the educational provision offered to its students:

- the progress the College is making to implement its enhancement strategy.

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

About Christ the Redeemer College

Christ the Redeemer College's (the College) mission is to provide high quality, high value education to advance the leadership, ministerial and professional aims of its students in a competitive and dynamic global environment. Its aim is to offer the most positive learning experience possible in a setting that encourages and fosters friendliness and positive social engagement. It seeks to provide an engaging learning environment that fosters community and at the same time allows for individuality among the diverse student body. Its approach to training is targeted towards preparing students to become leaders in their chosen profession in business, employment or Christian ministry.

Since the last review the College has phased out of the partnership with Middlesex University, with the last intake for that programme being September 2014. All students registered with Middlesex will continue to study at the College until they complete their final year of the programme in 2016-17. The Roehampton University programme is now in place and the first cohort was expected for 2016, but this intake has been affected by a lack of student finance.

The College secured new premises and completed the purchase in May 2016. This took place at the end of the academic year and the College immediately relocated into these, thereby avoiding any disruption to students.

The College has identified some challenges including the new premises needing extensive renovation and repairs, which have now been completed for the beginning of the 2016-17 academic year. Achieving an unsatisfactory judgement for the Enhancement Expectation of the 2016 QAA Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) - HER (AP) has impacted enrolment at the College, particularly as the College is unable to receive funding for new students via the Student Loans Company. Existing students are not affected. However, this has caused the College to examine processes and procedures in the light of the Enhancement Expectation and to have prioritised how the Expectation should be met. The validation with Roehampton University means that this year the College will be working with two partner universities, including assimilating new processes and procedures required by Roehampton University.

There are eight continuing students on the programmes.

The recommendations regarding the operation of committees, annual monitoring and the currency of information have been addressed. The College now has an enhancement strategy that meets UK expectations.

Explanation of the findings about Christ the Redeemer College

This section explains the review findings in more detail.

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

1 Judgement: The enhancement of student learning opportunities

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

1.1 The Academic Board takes responsibility for the quality and enhancement of student learning opportunities. The College's approach to enhancement is informed by the provisions of the Quality Code, its relationship with its validating universities, and its interactions with students and other stakeholders. Enhancement is addressed specifically in the College's Policy on Quality Assurance and Enhancement and Strategy for Learning and Teaching Enhancement. The Quality, Enhancement and Curriculum Committee (QECC), Admissions and Recruitment Committee and Publications Committee were reinstated in March 2016 with updated terms of reference and student representation following the HER (AP). The enhancement of student learning opportunities is integral to the terms of reference for these committees. The QECC is responsible for the monitoring of enhancement. In June 2016 the Academic Board approved the College's enhancement cycle, with planned and timetabled meetings to ensure that enhancement initiatives are systematically monitored.

1.2 These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.3 The review team tested the Expectation by examining the Policy on Quality Assurance and Enhancement, the Strategy for Learning and Teaching Enhancement, and the College enhancement cycle. It examined the minutes and terms of reference of the Quality, Enhancement and Curriculum Committee (QECC), Admissions and Recruitment Committee and Publications Committee, which drive enhancement, and evidence provided by the College of various enhancement activities. The review team met the Principal, senior staff, students, and teaching and support staff.

1.4 Since the review in 2016, the College has addressed the recommendation to ensure a deliberate and systematic approach to enhancement, produced an effective action plan and evaluated the extent to which deliberate steps to enhance the quality of the learning experience are strategically driven and clearly articulated to staff and students. This has been undertaken against a challenging background of relocating to premises designed to enhance the students' learning experience. The QECC undertook a review of processes for the academic year 2016-17, and following its recommendations to Academic Board the College has implemented a series of clearly articulated enhancement initiatives, including those relating to admissions, the Visual, Auditory and Kinesthetic (VAK) learning styles questionnaire, development of the virtual learning environment (VLE), and student surveys to be conducted using online survey software, to enhance student learning opportunities in a deliberate and systematic manner.

1.5 The College is committed to improving the teaching and learning environment. Students expressed satisfaction with recent enhancements undertaken by the College. The new premises are well suited to teaching and learning, and the College's investment in technology has provided students with an enhanced VLE, an e-Granary Digital Library and access to a statistics software package. The employment of an IT Manager is indicative of the College's continued commitment to enhancing the learner experience.

1.6 Student representatives are engaging in the new committee structure, with participation supporting an environment in which students feel valued and part of a learning community. In addition to the Student Representative Council, the College has piloted using online survey software to ensure that all students' views are expressed.

1.7   Members of staff are aware of the College's enhancement cycle and strategy and are integrated into the College's governance structure. The College is committed to the development of staff, with a subsidy provided for staff undertaking teacher training. Members of staff are also engaged together in a wide range of development activities. Peer observations feed into a teachers' forum for the sharing of good practice, and a VAK learning styles questionnaire has enabled staff to recognise personal preferences in learning.

1.8   The College is using university partnerships to good effect. The link tutor from Middlesex University led an assessment training exercise. Additionally, the partnership with Roehampton University is a positive development. It offers theology-based programmes and are providing opportunities for the development of College staff, for instance by inviting them to attend the Learning and Teaching conference at Roehampton University.

1.9   The recommendation from the 2016 HER (AP) is being addressed and there is now a clear structure for the College to take deliberate steps to enhance the quality of the student learning experience and for the sharing of good practice and enhancement initiatives. Enhancement initiatives are clearly in evidence across the College and these might usefully be marshalled together into one strategic framework document. The College might usefully marshal the information on Enhancement into one strategic framework document. Nevertheless, the College's processes meet the Expectation.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

1.10   In reaching its judgement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook. The review team also used the QAA guidance on conducting a partial review.

1.11   The College now has a clear and deliberate strategy for enhancement. This is supported by the gathering and use of evidence.

1.12   The College **meets** the Expectation regarding Enhancement.

Glossary

This glossary is a quick-reference guide to terms in this report that may be unfamiliar to some readers. Definitions of key operational terms are also given on pages 21-24 of the [Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) handbook](#)

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

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

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

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

Awarding organisation
An organisation authorised to award a particular qualification; an organisation recognised by Ofqual to award Ofqual-regulated qualifications

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

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

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

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

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

e-learning
See technology enhanced or enabled learning.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Self-evaluation document
A report submitted by a higher education provider, assessing its own performance, to be used as evidence in a QAA review.

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

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

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

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

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