Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) of City and Guilds of London Art School

January 2017

Contents

About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at City and Guilds of London Art School. The review took place from 17 to 19 January 2017 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Dr Nick Dickson
- Mrs Catherine Fairhurst
- Dr Christopher Maidment (student reviewer).

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provided by City and Guilds of London Art School 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 (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 check is also made on the provider's financial sustainability, management and governance (FSMG) with the aim of giving students reasonable confidence that they should not be at risk of being unable to complete their course as a result of financial failure.

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/Educational-Oversight-.aspx

Key findings

QAA's judgements about City and Guilds of London Art School

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at City and Guilds of London Art School.

- The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of its degree-awarding bodies **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 City and Guilds of London Art School.

- The distinctive shared staff and student professional practice environment, which delivers a high quality learning experience (Expectation B3).
- The embedded, multi-tiered and responsive approach to student support, encompassing a range of methodologies to meet the pre and on-course requirements of all students (Expectations B4 and B2).
- The extensive arrangements for students to engage with industrial specialists to support their learning and preparation for future careers (Expectations B4 and B10).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations** to City and Guilds of London Art School.

By September 2017:

- Collect and evaluate admissions, retention and achievement data to monitor student academic performance at School as well as programme level (Expectation B8).

Affirmation of action being taken

The QAA review team **affirms** the following actions that the City and Guilds of London Art School is already taking to make academic standards secure and/or improve the educational provision offered to its students:

- the actions being taken to finalise and adopt the revised policies and procedures as detailed in the 'Strengthening the Infrastructure' Project (Expectations A2.1 and C)
- the completion of the assessment and feedback project, with particular reference to taking forward the assessment process map (Expectation B6).

Financial sustainability, management and governance

City and Guilds of London Art School has satisfactorily completed the financial sustainability, management and governance check.

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

About City and Guilds of London Art School

The City and Guilds of London Art School (the Art School) is a not-for-profit specialist art school with independent charitable status. Originally established in 1854 as the Lambeth School of Art, it has been operating from the campus in Kennington, London since 1879. Its mission is to teach the skills and historic legacies relating to the production both of new and original art work, and the conservation, restoration and replication of inherited artefacts of a kind integral either to the fabric of iconic buildings or the enhancement of their civic and private functions.

The Art School offers programmes validated by Birmingham City University, the University of the Arts of London Awarding Body, and the City and Guilds Institute. At the time of the review, 232 students were enrolled on programmes at the Art School. The Art School employs approximately 80 teachers, who range from teaching only one day per year to a 0.8 FT permanent contract.

The programmes currently offered by the Art School are:

- Foundation Diploma in Art and Design
- BA (Hons) Fine Art
- MA Fine Art
- BA (Hons) Conservation Studies
- Postgraduate Diploma in Conservation
- Postgraduate Diploma in Historic Carving
- MA Conservation (from 2018-19).

The first Review for Educational Oversight was in December 2012 and resulted in a judgement of confidence in how it manages its responsibilities for the standards of awards and for the quality and enhancement of the learning opportunities it offers. It also found that reliance can be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information provided about itself and the programmes it delivers. There were two features of good practice identified, relating to the emphasis on current professional practice and the preparation of students for specialist practice depending on their aspirations. The five recommendations related to annual review, staffing, the teaching and learning strategy, a staff handbook and formalising information checking procedures. All of these recommendations have been addressed through a comprehensive action plan.

The Art School has responded to changes in the regulatory landscape with significant organisational and cultural changes. The Principal and Academic Registrar were new in post in 2014 and given a broader remit than previously, and several other senior staff have had changed roles within the organisation. In 2014 there was a new Strategic Development Plan and in 2015 a 'Strengthening the Infrastructure' Project, aimed at developing a robust framework of regulations, policies and procedures aligned with its awarding bodies and the Quality Code.

There have also been developments in resources with a new IT infrastructure, new website, new virtual learning environment (VLE), and renovation and partial development of the site as detailed in the Site Masterplan.

Explanation of the findings about the City and Guilds of London Art School

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 the City and Guilds of London Art School

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Findings

1.1   The Art School offers programmes in art and design across FHEQ levels 4 to 7. It works with three awarding bodies: Birmingham City University (BCU), the City and Guilds Institute (C&G), and the University of Arts London Awarding Body (UALAB). The Art School enrolled 232 students in 2016-17.

1.2   The awarding bodies have responsibility for setting levels of the awards delivered at the Art School, and are responsible for academic standards. BCU has comprehensive processes for the setting and award of degrees. The UALAB programme, the Foundation Diploma in Art and Design, is supported by a programme specification, and as per BCU, UALAB has responsibility for setting the levels of the awards. The City and Guilds award differs slightly as it is mapped to the benchmark requirements of City and Guilds, which do not map entirely to either the FHEQ or the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF), but are benchmarked against the existing C&G levels.

1.3   The Art School's Quality Handbook details the programme approval and external benchmarking requirements of its awarding bodies, and these reflect those of the awarding bodies. The Art School's Academic Board has overall responsibility for setting and maintaining academic standards on behalf of its awarding bodies. The processes described above enable this Expectation to be met.

1.4   The team tested this area by examining documentation supplied by the Art School as well as by meeting with staff and students. In addition, the team examined student handbooks and annual monitoring reports.

1.5   There is a robust academic governance structure including the Academic Board, supported by Boards of Study for each programme. The Art School also has considerable experience in successfully operating and delivering programmes validated by several awarding bodies.

1.6   The Art School's expertise in this area ensures that detailed arrangements are implemented fully. This Expectation is therefore met, with a low level of risk.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A2.1): In order to secure their academic standards, degree-awarding bodies establish transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern how they award academic credit and qualifications.

Quality Code, *Chapter A2: Degree-Awarding Bodies' Reference Points for Academic Standards*

Findings

1.7   The Art School sets out its approach to academic governance in its Quality Handbook and its Operations Manual, which reflect the preferred model of BCU. There are department-based Boards of Study, which report to the Art School Academic Board, with involvement of awarding partners. Student representatives sit on the Boards of Study, and the Art School has ensured consistency across the membership of its governance bodies through the positions of the Principal, Academic Registrar and Head of Art Histories, who sit on all committees.

1.8   Ultimate responsibility for the setting and maintenance of the academic standards of the programmes offered by the Art School rests with its awarding bodies. The award of academic credit and qualifications is made in accordance with the overarching regulations and academic frameworks of the awarding bodies. The nature of specific responsibilities vary in ways outlined in the partnership documents and are articulated in the Art School's academic handbooks.

1.9   The Academic Board has overall responsibility for ensuring adherence to the policies and regulations of its awarding bodies, including assessment regulations. As part of this process, the Art School is responsible for setting, marking and moderation of assessment for the academic provision, under the jurisdiction of its awarding bodies. These systems, procedures and processes enable this Expectation to be met.

1.10   The review team tested this Expectation through examination of several evidence documents including the programme handbooks, Academic Board minutes, annual monitoring reports and external examiner reports. The team also met with staff and students.

1.11   The systems described above are robust and this is reinforced by the external examiner system. The Art School's awarding bodies approve and appoint external examiners based on nominations received from the Art School, apart from the City and Guilds programme for which the Art School appoints its own external examiner. The respective awarding bodies are responsible for training their external examiners. For the City and Guilds programme, the Art School has paired an industrial expert with an experienced academic at a nearby university to support their development in external examining.

1.12   In addition, standardisation meetings are held by staff to ensure the comparability and appropriateness of marking standards across the organisation. These meetings take place regularly with input from senior management and utilise the Assessment Policy and exemplars of staff practice as evidence for discussion. Students are provided with the relevant assessment information in their academic handbooks, which are updated annually.

1.13   The Art School recognises that it has challenges in managing the requirements of three awarding bodies and the review team **affirms** the actions being taken to finalise and adopt the revised policies and procedures, as detailed in the 'Strengthening the Infrastructure' Project.

1.14   The Art School staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the requirements of the awarding bodies. Reports from external examiners for the awards offered confirm that the awarding bodies are confident in the Art School's management and delivery of their respective awards.

1.15   The Art School ensures that its responsibilities in this area are both fully understood and embedded in its governance processes. In association with its awarding bodies the Art School has established transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern how they award academic credit and qualifications. The Expectation is therefore met and the level of risk is therefore 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

1.16   Both the Art School and the awarding bodies maintain the definitive records for each approved programme. The student handbooks contain detailed information about each programme including module descriptors, learning, teaching and assessment, resources, student support and services, academic regulations and policies, and the definitive approved programme specifications. Formal agreements supplemented by operations manuals describe the Art School's relationships with its awarding bodies.

1.17   Progress tutors and heads of department maintain records of student achievement, with student progression data reported at the programme annual review. The Art School produces transcripts of study for each student. The maintenance of these records enables the Expectation to be met.

1.18   The review team considered their effectiveness by scrutinising programme approval documentation, student handbooks and programme specifications. The review team also met with senior staff, teaching staff and students.

1.19   The Heads of Departments produce a comprehensive student handbook for each programme on an annual basis. They complete these on the standard Art School template, which ensures equity so that students receive consistent information. The Student Handbooks are the definitive record for students, staff and external examiners. They are easily accessible in hard copy, on the VLE, and issued to students on a memory stick. Prospective students have access to the programme specifications through the student handbook on the Art School website. The external examiners and the students confirm that assessment and programme documentation is clear.

1.20   The programme specifications clearly demonstrate that threshold academic standards are set and there is a clear understanding of the programmes that have been approved through formal processes.

1.21   The Art School and its awarding bodies maintain a definitive record of each programme and qualification offered and make effective provision of records of study to students and alumni. 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

1.22   The Art School has used its recent experience of validating a new MA in Conservation to develop a new process for developing future programmes. This process is compliant with the practices of all three of its awarding partners and has been developed with reference to the Quality Code. The process of programme design and approval takes into account the input of a variety of external expertise such as external examiners, subject experts and potential employers. The documented process requires the participation of at least one external expert.

1.23   Following submission to the Senior Management Team, a new proposal is considered by the Art School academic planning group against a series of criteria. A full proposal is then completed by specific staff members. The process for programme approval is set out in the Quality Handbook in both text and diagrammatic form.

1.24   The process includes a requirement for new programme proposals to have regard to the FHEQ, qualification characteristics and level descriptors. The procedure expects this to be evidenced and scrutinised by the Board of Study. The policies and procedures outlined have been designed with reference to the Quality Code and would enable this Expectation to be met.

1.25   The review team considered a range of evidence provided by the Art School and met with students and staff during the review visit. This enabled the review team to consider whether the design of the system was reflected by the experiences of different groups.

1.26   The Art School is yet to use its programme design and approval processes formally. However, the range of requirements set out are reflected in the documentation for the MA Conservation, including whether the Art School is able to deliver the programme at the appropriate level.

1.27   The Expectation is met and the risk is low because the Art School operates procedures that require the appropriate frameworks to be accounted for, and this has been demonstrated with the recent proposal.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.2): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that credit and qualifications are awarded only where:

- **the achievement of relevant learning outcomes (module learning outcomes in the case of credit and programme outcomes in the case of qualifications) has been demonstrated through assessment**
- **both UK threshold standards and their own academic standards have been satisfied.**

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

Findings

1.28　　Responsibility is delegated to the Art School for designing and operating individual assessments and for applying the Assessment Regulations defined by awarding partners. The Art School reports that it uses a range of assessment methods to allow students to demonstrate how they meet learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are detailed in the student handbooks for each module. The Art School's Assessment and Feedback Policy describes the use of summative assessment to demonstrate whether students have addressed the prescribed learning outcomes.

1.29　　The Operations Manual for BCU expects Examination Boards to be operated in accordance with BCU Standard Assessment Regulations. External examiners are asked to address whether programmes meet appropriate standards and are comparable to similar programmes elsewhere. This expectation of external examiners is also detailed in student handbooks. The reports of external examiners are considered through the annual monitoring process. The policies and procedures outlined allow the Expectation to be met.

1.30　　The review team considered a range of evidence provided by the Art School and met with students and staff during the review visit. This enabled the review team to consider whether the design of the system was reflected by the experiences of different groups.

1.31　　The reports of external examiners are clear that the Art School's programmes meet the required standards and lead to students producing work of a high quality. The Expectation is met and the risk is low because the Art School operates effective assessment procedures to maintain academic standards.

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

1.32   The responsibilities checklist for BCU gives the Art School responsibility for designing programme specifications and modules, which are validated by BCU. This is confirmed by the Operations Manual, with the expectation that BCU is consulted over any changes. A process of Annual Programme Monitoring is undertaken in line with BCU regulations, and is set out in the Quality Handbook.

1.33   External examiners are asked to address whether programmes meet appropriate standards and are comparable to similar programmes elsewhere. External examiners are specifically asked to address whether programmes remain consistent with Subject Benchmark Statements.

1.34   The Quality Handbook describes the inclusion of the periodic review process as part of the revalidation process for programmes validated by BCU. This process is expected to test whether programmes still meet appropriate academic standards. The policies and procedures outlined enable this Expectation to be met.

1.35   The review team considered a range of evidence provided by the Art School and met with students and staff during the review visit. This enabled the review team to consider whether the design of the system was reflected by the experiences of different groups.

1.36   Staff are able to articulate clearly how the annual monitoring process takes place. Annual monitoring reports are effective in taking account of the prescribed inputs. The reports of external examiners demonstrate satisfaction that the Art School's programmes maintain academic standards.

1.37   The Expectation is therefore met and the risk is low because the Art School operates effective procedures for monitoring its provision, including the use of external verification.

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

1.38   The Quality Handbook and Operations Manual reflect the approach of BCU to the design and approval of modules. These involve externality at all levels. The new MA in Conservation programme approval event describes the level of externality involved. The Art School utilises both academic and professional external experts in its programme approval events. The Art School also makes substantial use of external experts such as those in the British Museum and the Museum of London.

1.39   The Art School has sound processes for the monitoring and review of programmes. There are Boards of Study in place for all provision. These review a wide range of aspects of the programme. All programmes are monitored annually and robust annual monitoring reports are produced for consideration at the Art School committees. These processes enable this Expectation to be met.

1.40   The review team tested the effectiveness of the monitoring and review processes by examining documentation supplied by the Art School, including partnership agreements and procedural documents, annual monitoring reports, minutes of committee meetings, programme specifications, external examiners' reports, and programme handbooks. Meetings were also held with appropriate staff and students.

1.41   The Art School processes for programme monitoring and review are working effectively. There is appropriate and robust annual monitoring in place for all programmes and an effective periodic monitoring process in place for degree programmes, operating under the regulations of the respective validating bodies. Validation and other review events make explicit reference to appropriate external reference points and, where necessary, professional standards. Validation and revalidation panels involve the use of external experts, both academic and professional. These procedures indicate that review processes are carefully followed, have appropriate external and employer participation, and that there is appropriate follow-through of responses to revalidation conditions and recommendations.

1.42   The external examiner reports detailing the Art School's approach to assessment are favourable, confirming that academic standards have been met.

1.43   Overall the Art School is effectively and robustly managing its responsibilities for monitoring and reviewing its higher education provision. It is operating in accordance with the requirements of its awarding partners to ensure that academic standards are being maintained. External and independent expertise is used at key stages of maintaining academic standards and the team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

1.44   In reaching its positive judgement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) Handbook.

1.45   All of the Expectations for this judgement area are met and the associated levels of risk are low. In all sections under academic standards the Art School is also required to adhere to the procedures of its awarding bodies. There is one affirmation in this section which relates to continuing the work on the revised policies and procedures, as detailed in the 'Strengthening the Infrastructure' Project.

1.46   The review team concludes that the maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of the awarding bodies at the Art School **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 Art School has used its recent experience of validating a new MA in Conservation to develop a new process for developing future programmes. New programme approvals are rare but the development of BA and MA-level courses in Historic Carving is currently being discussed as part of the revalidation of courses with BCU. The process for programme approval is documented in both text and diagrammatic form in the Quality Handbook. It is compliant with the practices of all three of its awarding partners and has been developed with reference to the Quality Code.

2.2   The Art School describes a process of considering how new courses fit with its overall academic strategy. The process describes a variety of ways in which the development of new programmes may be instigated, including formal annual monitoring processes and informal discussions. The process also considers the input of external expertise such as external examiners, subject experts and potential employers. The documented process requires the participation of at least one external expert. The policies and procedures outlined allow the Expectation to be met.

2.3   The review team considered a range of evidence provided by the Art School and met with students and staff during the review visit. This enabled the review team to consider whether the design of the system was reflected by the experiences of different groups.

2.4   The process described above includes a requirement for new programme proposals to have regard to the FHEQ, qualification characteristics and level descriptors. The procedure states that this should be evidenced and scrutinised by the Board of Study. The Terms of Reference for the Boards of Study include student representatives in the membership. The team found these processes to be robust.

2.5   A process of progression through the hierarchy of Art School Committees is described in the procedure and this is followed by the Art School. Following submission to Senior Management Team a new proposal is considered by the Art School academic planning group against a series of criteria. A full proposal is then completed by specific staff members. The responsibilities checklist for BCU gives the Art School responsibility for designing programme specifications and modules, which are validated by BCU. This is confirmed by the Operations Manual, with the expectation that BCU is consulted over any changes.

2.6   Staff and students could articulate their involvement and the involvement of external expertise in programme development. In addition to being members of the Board of Study, students reported that they were consulted on the development of the MA. Additionally, employers involved in the revalidation of the MA Conservation reported that they had been briefed effectively on their role.

2.7   The programme approval process is set out in the Quality Handbook, which is still to be formally adopted. Therefore the affirmation set out under A2.1, with regard to finalising

and adopting the revised policies and procedures as detailed in the 'Strengthening the Infrastructure' Project, is also relevant to this Expectation.

2.8   The Expectation is met and the risk is low because the Art School has developed and operates an effective process for the design, development and approval of programmes.

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 Art School has responsibility for the admission of students to all its programmes. The Admissions Policy includes the regulatory requirements of the awarding bodies, as well as Expectation B2 of the Quality Code and the relevant sections of the Competitions and Markets Authority Regulations. The website contains detailed information about programme structures, minimum entry requirements for each programme, including English language requirements and selection criteria, fees and finance.

2.10   Prospective students apply directly to the Art School and a final decision for acceptance or rejection is made and recorded. The Annual Programme Monitoring reports contain an analysis of recruitment and admissions data. The Head of Student Support meets with applicants with disabilities. There is a formal Admissions Complaints and Appeals procedure. These arrangements enable this Expectation to be met.

2.11   The review team considered their effectiveness by scrutinising the Admissions Policy and other relevant documents, and the Art School's website, and in discussion with senior management, admissions staff, and current and former students.

2.12   Appropriate organisational structures and processes underpin the Art School's recruitment, selection and admission policies. The institutional admissions strategy is informed by the overall strategic priorities. The Art School has revised the Admissions Policy as part of the 'Strengthening the Infrastructure' Project. There are appropriate structures for the selection and admission of students. The trained admissions staff initially scrutinise and assess the applications and keep a record of admissions decisions. The use of admissions data is not yet fully developed although the Annual Programme Monitoring reports contain an analysis of recruitment and admissions data at programme level.

2.13   The admissions process enables inclusivity and diversity among applicants and the staff and students can give examples of students with non-standard entry. The selection procedure is consistent, transparent and reliable. Two academic staff interview all applicants using published guidelines and assess a portfolio or presentation of work. They assess the applicants' performance against the published selection criteria and record outcomes on a standard form.

2.14   The Art School admissions web pages give clear and detailed selection criteria, portfolio guidance, details of how to apply, interview guidance and the evidence required from applicants in support of their application. Students say that the information is very helpful and gives them excellent support to enable them to make a successful transition from prospective student to current student, and also gives them an understanding of the demands of the programmes.

2.15   Students receive comprehensive and continuing induction covering Art School policies, programme requirements and regulations, health and safety, assessments and the support available to them. They are provided with a memory stick containing relevant policies and regulations, including complaints and appeals, as well as the student handbook.

2.16   All policies require the Art School's Academic Board and the Board of Trustees to scrutinise an annual report. 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. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B3): Higher education providers, working with their staff, students and other stakeholders, articulate and systematically review and enhance the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices, so that every student is enabled to develop as an independent learner, study their chosen subject(s) in depth and enhance their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking.

Quality Code, *Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching*

Findings

2.17   The Art School's approach to learning and teaching is led by its Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (LTAS), which is new for the institution and arose from the 2012 QAA review. A key feature of The Art School's programmes is its high number of student contact hours and its extensive studio space, combined with substantial one-to-one teaching with industry-level practitioners.

2.18   The Art School employs a range of staff, relying on a core of permanent academics, supported by part-time sessional staff. The Art School has enhanced its approach to employing and inducting academic staff following the 2012 review, and has now produced handbooks to support new and existing staff, which are being used effectively. The Art School recognises the complexities its staff may experience in dealing with three awarding bodies and the range of programmes delivered, and have attempted to deal with this accordingly through the production of its staff handbook and staff development approach, while enhancing its peer support scheme.

2.19   All academic staff undergo a thorough induction and probationary process with respect to strategies for learning and teaching and assessment. Additionally, they have access to staff development and funds to enhance their teaching and assessment knowledge and skills, and especially to support their ongoing artistic practice. Good practice is shared informally at committee meetings, and teaching staff were able to discuss how this had impacted on their teaching practice. The processes described above enable this Expectation to be met.

2.20   The review team examined the documents relevant to learning and teaching described above and held meetings with senior staff, teaching staff, support staff, students, employers and alumni.

2.21   The Art School recognises the importance of preparing students for professional practice or further study, and its LTAS describes how this approach is dealt with. Students reported that they appreciate the learning opportunities presented. The more practical art and design skills it teaches its students are underpinned by contextual knowledge provided by the Department of Art Histories, and the external examiners commented favourably on this approach. External examiners have commented favourably on the mix and specialities of the Art School's teaching staff, as have students. The distinctive shared staff and student professional practice environment, which delivers a high quality learning experience, is a feature of **good practice**.

2.22   The Art School operates a two-tutor support mechanism for its students, with a Pastoral Tutor and a Personal Progress Tutor who have different responsibilities. This holistic approach to tutorial support is comprehensive and provides students with substantial support in their studies.

2.23   Facilities for learning and teaching are a key strength of the Art School, and are extensive and industry standard. The Art School has taken steps through the Strategic

Development Plan to ensure that its facilities remain at this high level. In addition, students are supported by the Art School VLE, which is being used extensively by both staff and students, including the provision of a variety of accessible materials.

2.24　　　In practice, strategies for teaching and assessment enable the Art School to ensure effectively that there is a clear context for the facilitation of developmental opportunities and through this, student achievement. Teaching staff enthusiastically take up the opportunities offered to them to attend both external and internal development events, including support for their continuing artistic practice. There is a robust environment which encourages the development and sharing of good practice, contributing significantly to the student experience, and which enables them to develop as independent learners, enhancing their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking. The review team therefore concludes that Expectation B3 is met, with a low level of associated risk.

Expectation:　Met
Level of risk:　Low

Expectation (B4): Higher education providers have in place, monitor and evaluate arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.

Quality Code, *Chapter B4: Enabling Student Development and Achievement*

Findings

2.25   The Art School's approach to enabling student development and achievement is led by a range of strategies, including the LTAS, the policy on student engagement, Inclusive Learning Policy, Assessment and Feedback Policy and its tutorial framework. Students report that they feel supported and enabled to achieve good results, and that the enhanced tutorial arrangements have greatly improved their experience.

2.26   Academic support is provided in a range of ways, including access to a member of staff with substantial experience in academic writing, technicians in studio spaces, and a full-time librarian. Students report that they are satisfied with the support arrangements in place.

2.27   Students are provided with programme handbooks, which detail all the requirements of their programme as well as support mechanisms. As a further enhancement to these handbooks, the Art School is currently updating its Quick Guide to the Art School's procedures and policies. Programme handbooks are provided both on a memory stick issued at induction, and via the Art School's VLE.

2.28   The Art School employs a Head of Student Support who has responsibility for ensuring that students are made aware of the range of support facilities available, as well as developing individual learning plans with students. These systems and processes enable this Expectation to be met.

2.29   The review team examined the policies, procedures and other documents described above and met with senior staff, teaching staff, support staff and students.

2.30   A strength of the Art School system is that the Head of Student Support retains strong links with the two-tutor system, with tutors able to refer students to student support mechanisms and vice versa. The Art School also provides access to a range of external support facilities, including assistance for dyslexic students and those experiencing mental health difficulties. Financial assistance, in the form of bursaries and opportunities for students to undertake commissioned work, is greatly appreciated by students, who reported that this help had enabled them to complete their studies successfully. The embedded multi-tiered approach to student support, encompassing a range of methodologies to meet the pre and on-course requirements of all students, is a feature of **good practice**.

2.31   The Art School has excellent links with art industry specialists, and a variety of mechanisms are in place to provide students with a means to engage with the industry. Some employers give prizes to the Art School students, there is engagement with student exhibitions, and several employers have been engaged with validation panels and committee work at the Art School. Both current students and alumni greatly appreciated the opportunities the Art School provides for them to work with industry specialists. In return, employers report that the Art School graduates are extremely well prepared for work in this area. The extensive arrangements for students to engage with industrial specialists to support their learning and preparation for future careers is **good practice**.

2.32   The review team concludes that the Art School has in place, and is able to monitor and evaluate, arrangements and resources that enable students to develop their academic,

personal and professional potential. The team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of 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

2.33   The Art School has a formal and an informal approach to student engagement. The formal approach is that elected student representatives are members of all the deliberative committees where they can raise issues about their programme and contribute to its development. These are the Academic Board, Boards of Study, Health and Safety Committee, Marketing and Communications Committee, and the Student Life and Experience Working Group. The departmental Boards of Study report to the Academic Board, which in turn reports to the Board of Trustees.

2.34   The student representatives have a training session to enable them to understand their roles, responsibilities and the governance structure. Student representatives chair the departmental Student Forums, a meeting of the whole student group, and then report back to the termly Board of Study. Each term the student representatives meet with the Principal, Vice Principal and Academic Registrar to discuss issues affecting the whole Art School.

2.35   The Art School evaluates student engagement and the effectiveness of the Students Forums annually. The student handbooks and the Quality Handbook explain the formal approach. An annual online survey using the same questions as the National Student Survey informs annual monitoring. The Art School also has an informal approach because of the small student cohorts, support, the tutorial system and the availability of the senior staff. The policies and procedures for student engagement enable this Expectation to be met.

2.36   The review team tested the Expectation and the effectiveness of student engagement by reading policy documents, the student handbooks, student surveys, and the student submission, and by meeting senior staff, teaching staff, students, former students and professional support staff.

2.37   Students make a full contribution to the Art School's educational enhancement and quality assurance through the formal representative system. There are examples where students have impacted institutional decision making, for example through suggestions about increasing the number of cross-School activities, and contributions to the design brief for the new website and to the design and development of a new MA in Conservation. Student involvement in curriculum development was commended by BCU during the revalidation process. Students say that the programmes and assessments are designed to meet their needs and speak very highly of the Art School's inclusive and collaborative culture.

2.38   The Art School is responsive to students' concerns through informal channels such as tutorials and dialogue with the management team. The student submission and former students speak very positively about the Art School's approach to resolving issues and its supportive approach. Students can express their views informally in discussion with teaching staff and senior management. Students confirm that the Art School recognises the importance of student feedback and is highly responsive to it: they gave examples of actions taken in response to their concerns, including extending the library opening hours and changing assessment feedback procedures.

2.39   The Art School has a clear view of its approach to student engagement and offers a supportive environment with an accessible senior team. The Art School values and responds

to the students' contributions and has taken deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their education experience. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B6): Higher education providers operate equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment, including for the recognition of prior learning, which enable every student to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the credit or qualification being sought.

Quality Code, *Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning*

Findings

2.40   The Art School reports that more than 25 per cent of its students require additional support for a diagnosed physical or mental disability. The Art School's Learning and Teaching Strategy requires it to make reasonable adjustments to assessment approaches to meet individual students' needs.

2.41   The Student Handbooks set out the marking criteria for each module. Where appropriate they state that alternative forms of assessment will be set out in the module or projects briefs for those students with specific needs. The basis for such adjustments is a Personal Support Plan agreed with the Head of Student Support and the student's Head of Department and which also covers possible changes to assessment methods.

2.42   The Art School has an Assessment and Feedback Policy and its implementation is monitored through Annual Programme Monitoring. The policy includes a process for the internal moderation and verification of assessment outcomes.

2.43   The Art School also has an Upholding Academic Integrity Policy, which sets out the procedures for addressing academic misconduct. Personal Progress Tutors have responsibility for training students in avoiding poor academic practice. The Art School also intends to produce a further student Guide to Academic Integrity.

2.44   Responsibility is delegated to the Art School for designing and operating individual assessments and for applying Assessment Regulations defined by awarding partners. The Art School uses a range of assessment methods to allow students to demonstrate how they meet learning outcomes.

2.45   The Art School has recently adopted an Inclusive Learning and Participation Policy and related briefing note. The briefing note guides staff in both text and diagrammatic forms through the ways in which they can help students. The policy is supported by a briefing note on confidential information.

2.46   The Art School reports that assessments are reviewed at Boards of Study with a view to both incorporating student feedback into future assessment strategies, and seeking to minimise the need for adjustments to be made. This has led to the greater use of project briefs that allow assessments to be tailored to individual students.

2.47   This membership of Examination Boards is defined in the Operations Manual for the partnership with BCU and is referred to in the Quality Handbook. The Art School's forthcoming Academic Regulations are also expected to set out the constitution of the Examinations Board. Responsibility for mitigating/extenuating circumstances is delegated to the Art School by BCU and UALAB, working within each awarding partner's regulations.

2.48   Self-reflection, through Annual Programme Reports and Boards of Study, is used to direct the enhancement of assessment processes. The resulting refinements are recorded in Action Plans and reviewed annually.

2.49   The Art School has little experience of accrediting prior learning (APL) but uses BCU's policy where necessary. The Art School has developed a revised policy addressing the APL, which is currently in draft form and which is expected to be approved in spring 2017. Therefore, the affirmation set out under A2.1, with regard to finalising and adopting the revised policies and procedures as detailed in the 'Strengthening the Infrastructure' Project, is also relevant to this Expectation. The policies and procedures outlined above allow the Expectation to be met.

2.50   The review team considered a range of evidence provided by the Art School and met with students and staff during the review visit. This enabled the review team to consider whether the design of the system was reflected by the experiences of different groups.

2.51   Students demonstrate a clear understanding of where assessment briefs, including assessment criteria, are located. Students and employers feel that assessment prepares students for further study and professional practice. Students report that they recognise the progression between levels and feel challenged as they advance through their studies. Students also noted that lectures are set aside to discuss expectations of written assignments and feel that a clear emphasis is placed on avoiding plagiarism. Staff and students note that guidelines on referencing are available from Moodle. Students report that they are able to access high quality writing support, through a Writing Fellow supported by the Royal Literary Fund.

2.52   Staff describe a process of marking and moderation that is consistent with the requirements of the Assessment and Feedback Policy. External examiners comment favourably about assessment processes across the range of courses, noting where recommended changes have been implemented. Staff are also able to articulate how they have responded to the recommendations of external examiners. Additionally, staff describe a positive process of incorporating previously identified reasonable adjustments into assessment briefs, limiting the need for further adjustments. The embedded, multi-tiered and responsive approach to student support, encompassing a range of methodologies to meet the pre and on-course requirements of all students, is a feature of **good practice**.

2.53   The Art School recognises that further development of assessment and feedback processes is necessary, for example the consistent application of the feedback principles set out in the Assessment and Feedback Policy. Students have mixed views on feedback: some would welcome more in-depth feedback returned to them more promptly, while others feel that they could approach any tutor for feedback at any time. Responding to student views on feedback, a project is currently being run to further develop assessment and feedback practices. The assessment process map associated with this project has the potential to significantly enhance the extent to which assessment is undertaken systematically and consistently in the future. This review team **affirms** the completion of the assessment and feedback project, with particular reference to taking forward the assessment process map.

2.54   The Expectation is met and the risk is low because the Art School operates robust and effective procedures for the assessment of students.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code*, Chapter B7: External Examining*

Findings

2.55   The Art School's approach to engagement with external examiners is detailed in the Quality Handbook and Operations Manual. For BCU programmes, the Art School is able to nominate preferred external examiners, who are then subject to Board of Study approval, and then BCU sign off. For the UALAB programmes, the awarding body is entirely responsible for the appointment, induction and training of external examiners, according to its processes. For the Art School's Historic Carving programme the Art School retains responsibility for its external examiners, using processes detailed in the quality manual which reflect those of BCU and are therefore consistent. Given the specialist nature of proposed external examiners for this course, the Art School provides a mentoring scheme for external examiners with the requisite industrial experience who may otherwise lack formal external examining experience. These processes enable this Expectation to be met.

2.56   The review team examined all the documents supplied with regard to external examining and held meetings with senior staff, teaching staff, students, alumni and employers.

2.57   The Art School is clear about its responsibilities with regard to the appointment and induction of external examiners, and those of its awarding bodies.

2.58   Copies of external examiner reports are considered at the relevant Board of Study, and form part of the Annual Programme Monitoring process for the respective awarding body. The role of the external examiner is explained to students in programme handbooks. Reports are made available to students through the Art School's VLE, and to student representatives through the Academic Board.

2.59   Teaching staff have a clear understanding of the importance of the role of external examiners and their own responsibilities in responding to comments from them. They also fully understand the need for publication of reports to students.

2.60   The Art School responds effectively, timely and robustly to examiner comments in the appropriate annual report. These reports are considered at all levels of the Art School in a well regulated process, starting with heads of department and going through the relevant committees. External examiners' reports inform action plans effectively at both programme and School level.

2.61   The role of external examiners is well embedded in the Art School's quality assurance systems and it makes scrupulous use of their expertise. The Art School also makes robust use of all external reports. The team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B8): Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective, regular and systematic processes for monitoring and for review of programmes.

Quality Code, *Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review*

Findings

2.62   The Art School uses a system of Annual Programme Monitoring Reports (APMs), which cover particular themes and which are based on a standard format. The Art School has in place a system of peer feedback between Heads of Departments, who comment on Annual Programme Monitoring reports. This is a requirement of BCU's regulations on Validation and Programme Review. Annual Programme Monitoring feeds into an Annual Academic Report. The Art School reports that annual monitoring requirements have been widened to include non-validated provision, allowing a more consistent approach to be taken across the Art School.

2.63   The APM Reports are produced from student feedback, external examiner reports, student assessment data and student feedback. The BCU Operations Manual articulates the requirement to produce an annual monitoring report using BCU's template. Reports are submitted to BCU for consideration.

2.64   A joint Operations Manual with BCU sets out the relative responsibilities of each partner. The partnership with BCU was reported to have been reviewed in 2016, leading to a revised Operations Manual.

2.65   For validated programmes the revalidation process is also considered to include periodic review. Although not validated by BCU, Historic Carving courses are expected to be reviewed every five years using a similar methodology. Self-evaluation documents are produced for each programme and reviewed through the revalidation process.

2.66   Other courses are accredited by the City and Guilds Institute and the University of Arts London Awarding Body (UALAB). UALAB maintains oversight of quality through managing external moderators.

2.67   The Art School has developed a Quality Handbook to allow a consistent approach to be taken to quality assurance across courses accredited or validated by all three awarding partners. The Quality Handbook includes new procedures for making minor and major modifications to programmes. These will be used through the forthcoming review of the Historic Carving courses. The policies and procedures outlined above enable the Expectation to be met.

2.68   The review team considered a range of evidence provided by the Art School and met with students and staff during the review visit. This enabled the review team to consider whether the design of the system was reflected by the experiences of different groups.

2.69   The Art School has responded effectively to the recommendation of the previous review to put in place an effective system of annual monitoring for all provision. It is a positive development that this includes reports from support departments.

2.70   Following recommendations from the previous review, the Art School has now embedded an improved and effective process of Annual Programme Monitoring, with reports prepared by the Programme Leader and signed off by the Boards of Study.

2.71   Staff are able to articulate clearly how programme monitoring operates, including how the outcomes of monitoring feed into the Art School's committee structure. Students are clear that the programme monitoring process is responsive to their feedback.

2.72   The process of peer review of annual monitoring required by BCU policies is an effective mechanism for assuring the quality of annual monitoring.

2.73   The annual monitoring reports are comprehensive and clearly take account of the prescribed range of data sources. However, the Art School recognises the need to make more strategic and systematic use of student data. The review team therefore **recommends** that by September 2017, the Art School collects and evaluates admissions, retention and achievement data to monitor student academic performance at School as well as programme level.

2.74   The review team concludes that the Art School operates effective, regular and systematic processes for monitoring and for review of programmes and that therefore this Expectation is met and the 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

2.75   The Art School has formal policies with informal initial stages for both academic appeals and student complaints. The Student Complaints Procedure is for students to seek redress for an aspect of their experience at the Art School that they feel has not come up to the expected standard. This procedure can also be used to bring a complaint under the Protecting Dignity and Respect Policy or the Equality and Diversity Policy. The Complaints Policy confirms that a student who believes that a complaint has not been appropriately dealt with may refer it to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

2.76   The Academic Appeals Procedure is the detailed procedure by which students can request a review of decisions of an Art School Examination Board.

2.77   Students on programmes validated by Birmingham City University are also subject to BCU's Assessment Regulations and appeal processes. The policies and procedure of the Art School allow Expectation B9 to be met.

2.78   The review team considered the complaints and appeals policies, the student handbooks and the VLE, and met staff and students.

2.79   The Art School has comprehensive and accessible policies and procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints. The student handbooks outline all policies where there is a link to the detailed procedure on the VLE. Students say that they are aware of the procedures and where they could find details of the policies. They say that they are very satisfied with the support they have received from staff whenever they have informally highlighted an issue. Students say that they would contact their tutor or student representative in the first instance.

2.80   There have been no formal complaints or appeals in recent years and staff and students say that the informal mechanism is working effectively. The Art School's Academic Board and the Board of Trustees scrutinise annual reports from all policies. As there have been no formal complaints or appeals the review team was unable to view the strategic oversight of the academic appeals and student complaints process and outcomes.

2.81   The Art School has fair, accessible and timely formal and informal procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints. The review team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B10: Managing Higher Education Provision with Others*

Findings

2.82   There are no arrangements in place at the Art School for delivering learning opportunities with organisations other than the awarding bodies with which it currently works.

2.83   As referred to in Expectation B4, the Art School has excellent links with art industry specialists, and a variety of mechanisms are in place to provide students with a means to engage with the industry. Some employers give prizes to the Art School students, there was evidence of engagement with student exhibitions, and several employers have been engaged with validation panels and committee work at the Art School. Both current students and alumni greatly appreciated the opportunities. The Art School provides for them to work with industry specialists. In return, employers reported that the Art School graduates were extremely well prepared for work in this area.

2.84   The arrangements for students to engage with industrial specialists to support their learning and teaching and preparation for their future careers are robust. The team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of 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

2.85   The Art School does not offer research degrees; therefore, this Expectation does not apply.

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.86   In reaching its judgement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) Handbook.

2.87   All of the Expectations relating to the Art School's quality of student learning opportunities are met, with low risk. The review team makes one recommendation in this section that concerns collecting and evaluating admissions, retention and achievement data to monitor student academic performance at School as well as programme level.

2.88   There are three features of good practice relating to shared staff and student professional practice environment, the comprehensive student support arrangements and the extensive arrangements for students to engage with industrial specialists. There is one affirmation relating to the completion of the assessment and feedback project.

2.89   The review team concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities at the Art School **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 Art School is responsible for ensuring that information it publishes is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy and has processes in place to fulfil this responsibility. The Art School publishes information about its higher education provision through its website, on social media platforms, in student handbooks and in newsletters.

3.2   The Art School's Public Information Policy identifies the initiator, the content generator, and the approval process of all public information. The link tutor checks marketing material and web content for programmes validated by BCU. The Principal has overall responsibility for accuracy of content.

3.3   The website includes information about programmes, facilities and detailed handbooks for each programme. The VLE is a repository for teaching materials, information and student handbooks. This is managed by the librarian, who is responsible for version control and currency; teaching staff upload their own lecture materials.

3.4   The processes that the Art School have in place enable this Expectation to be met.

3.5   The review team tested this Expectation by meeting students and staff, and by scrutinising published materials, minutes of meetings, the VLE, the website, and the student submission to this review.

3.6   As referred to in Expectation A2.1 there are challenges in managing the policies and procedures to satisfy the requirements of three awarding bodies, and the affirmation relates to the continuation of the 'Strengthening the Infrastructure' Project and providing relevant information to all stakeholders.

3.7   The Institutional Mission Statement is clearly stated and the Learning and Teaching Strategy 2015-2020, mapped to the Quality Code, explicitly articulates the educational values of the Art School. The students, graduates, teaching staff, employers and external examiners all confirm these values, indicating that everyone is familiar with these documents.

3.8   The previous review concluded with a recommendation to formalise procedures, ensuring the accuracy and completeness of information. The detailed Public Information Policy now comprehensively specifies the procedures for publishing information in programme documents, Student Handbook, the website, newsletters, advertisements, press releases, and social media. This ensures that they are transparent, accurate and fit for purpose.

3.9   The Art School revised and developed the website during 2015 in consultation with staff and students. It is focused, with a link to a more detailed handbook. Information is appropriately visual to illustrate the Art School's learning environment and resources for practical creative work. As described in B2 the Art School admissions web pages contain full information on the application and admission processes. The students' meeting and the

student submission confirm that the information on the website and within the Art School is helpful and accurate.

3.10   The thorough and comprehensive Student Handbooks are reviewed annually for accuracy, consistency and completeness and signed off by the Academic Registrar. Students receive this on a memory stick at the start of the programme and all the information is also on the VLE, accessible by a mobile phone application.

3.11   The Art School publishes an annual Newsletter covering a wide range of staff and student creative activities. The students say that this, together with the web site, helps prospective students to select their programme with an understanding of the academic and creative environment. They say that their experience was beyond their expectations.

3.12   The information produced by the Art School for its intended audiences about its provision is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

3.13   In reaching its judgement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) Handbook.

3.14   The Expectation for this judgement area is met and the associated level of risk is low. There are no recommendations, affirmations or features of good practice relating to this expectation.

3.15   The review team concludes that the quality of the information about learning opportunities at the Art School **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 Art School's Planning Ahead process has engaged a full range of leadership, staff, students and trustees in articulating the Art School's mission and setting the basis for preparing a strategic plan. A clear set of mission statements and core values are articulated. The values expressed include the importance of community. This process has driven development of activities across the Art School. The Strategic Plan is reviewed annually by the Senior Management Team and Board of Trustees.

4.2   The Art School's Governance Statement sets out the responsibility of the Academic Board for overseeing the quality of provision, including ownership of the Academic Plan and the dissemination of good practice. The Academic Board has responsibility for the internal approval of new policies and procedures. These are then referred to the Board of Trustees for approval. The Academic Registrar has responsibility for the day-to-day management of quality assurance.

4.3   The Quality Handbook describes a process of enhancement where course-level Annual Programme Monitoring and accompanying Action Plans feed into a School-wide Annual Academic Report and Action Plan, allowing dissemination across the Art School. The Terms of Reference for each of these committees includes this link. Where issues raised at Boards of Study may be relevant to the Art School as a whole, these are considered by the Academic Board. The inclusion of the Principal and Vice-Principal on each Board of Study provides this link.

4.4   The Annual Academic Report and Action Plan summarises key achievements and priorities for the Art School. This is disseminated to staff using Moodle. The Art School uses the same set of structures for both pedagogical and strategic enhancement, particularly the Annual Programme Monitoring processes. The Action Plan records progress on ongoing projects such as improved processes and improvements to the School's estate.

4.5   The Quality Handbook also describes alternative routes for instigating enhancement, stating that proposals may come from the Senior Management Team and recommendations from external reviews, as well as from more informal routes such as student forums.

4.6   The Art School's Learning and Teaching Strategy articulates priorities for enhancement, including an improved estate and less reliance on the quality assurance framework of awarding partners. A specific, temporary appointment has been made to the role of Quality Advisor, working on a project entitled 'Strengthening the Infrastructure'. This project entails developing a framework of regulations, policies and procedures to comply with the Quality Code. Final completion of the project is scheduled for May 2017. However, the Art School asserts that policies produced through this project embed existing approaches used within the School. The policies and procedures outlined above enable the Expectation to be met.

4.7   The review team considered a range of evidence provided by the Art School and met with students and staff during the review visit. This enabled the review team to consider whether the design of the system was reflected by the experiences of different groups.

4.8   The Art School relates that annual monitoring reports have found that good practice has continued to be embedded. Students report that actions to make wider links with professional practice have led to opportunities such as residencies at Windsor and Newton and ACME Studios.

4.9   The Art School's approach to enhancement is systematic and robust in nature, reflecting a change in culture towards a School-wide approach to sharing good practice. The process facilitates the dissemination of good practice effectively across the Art School. Staff are able to articulate how departments are learning from good practice in other departments through the committee structure.

4.10   Students are clearly able to influence the cycle of enhancement, through representation on decision-making committees. Additionally, students are able to articulate examples of where changes have been made as a result of student feedback.

4.11   A key part of current enhancement activities is the 'Strengthening the Infrastructure' Project, which is nearing completion. Therefore, the affirmation set out under A2.1, with regard to finalising and adopting the revised policies and procedures as detailed in the 'Strengthening the Infrastructure' Project, is also relevant to this Expectation.

4.12   The Expectation is met and the risk is low because the Art School has put in place policies, procedures and committee structures that allow the systematic translation of good practice into School-wide enhancement.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

4.13   In reaching its judgement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) Handbook.

4.14   The Expectation for this judgement area is met and the associated level of risk is low. There are no recommendations, affirmations or features of good practice in this section.

4.15   The review team concludes that the enhancement of student learning opportunities at the Art School **meets** UK expectations.

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.