



City of London Business College

**Review for Educational Oversight
by the Quality Assurance Agency
for Higher Education**

September 2012

Key findings about City of London Business College

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in September 2012, the QAA review team (the team) considers that there can be **confidence** in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of the Association of Business Executives, ATHE, Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, Edexcel, The Organisation for Tourism and Hospitality Management, Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations, and the Management Development Partnership (an affiliated institution of the University of the West of England, Bristol).

The team also considers that there can be **confidence** in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the quality and enhancement of the learning opportunities it offers on behalf of the awarding body and organisations.

The team considers that **reliance can** be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the provider is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

Good practice

The team has identified the following **good practice**:

- well developed and effective mechanisms for communicating with staff and sharing good practice (paragraph 1.5)
- carefully developed and comprehensive academic and welfare support (paragraph 2.8).

Recommendations

The team has also identified a number of **recommendations** for the enhancement of the higher education provision.

The team considers that it is **advisable** for the provider to:

- ensure that the annual programme reviews fully and consistently utilise data and student feedback in the review and evaluation of all provision (paragraph 1.3)
- formulate and publicise procedures that are consistent with awarding body and organisation requirements to address suspected plagiarism and other forms of unfair practice (paragraph 3.4).

The team considers that it would be **desirable** for the provider to:

- implement the revised committee structure to strengthen oversight and reporting on higher education programmes (paragraph 1.4)
- raise staff awareness of the Academic Infrastructure and relevant sections of the *Code of practice* (paragraph 1.7)
- adopt a more formal approach to staff development and performance review to ensure that all needs are identified (paragraph 2.10)
- develop clear policies and requirements to review and monitor the virtual learning environment to provide parity of support for students in all programme areas (paragraphs 2.13 and 3.8)
- implement a common template for programme handbooks to promote consistency and provide effective support for all students (paragraph 3.3).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)¹ (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at City of London Business College (the provider; the College). The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the provider discharges its stated responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes of study that the provider delivers on behalf of the Association of Business Executives, ATHE, Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, Edexcel, The Organisation for Tourism and Hospitality Management, Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations, and the Management Development Partnership (an affiliated institution of the University of the West of England, Bristol). The review was carried out by Dr Elizabeth Briggs, Dr D Gwynne Harries, Dr Andrew Lancaster (reviewers), and Dr Judith Foreman (coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the [Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook](#).² Evidence in support of the review included a self-evaluation document and supporting evidence supplied by the provider, a student written submission, meetings with staff and students.

The review team also considered the provider's use of the relevant external reference points:

- the awarding body and organisations: published syllabuses and programme specifications, assessment regulations and assessment criteria
- the Qualifications and Credit Framework: level indicators and descriptors
- British Accreditation Council requirements
- the Academic Infrastructure.

Please note that if you are unfamiliar with any of the terms used in this report you can find them in the [Glossary](#).

City of London Business College (the College) was established in 1990 to provide vocational training to local residents. Since then, it has developed its provision to include a mixture of professional and vocationally-related programmes in the broad subject areas of business management, health studies, computing and teacher education. The range of students has also increased to include international as well as local students. In 2005, the College gained accreditation from the British Accreditation Council (BAC). It operates from three sites in north London.

The College's academic structure comprises two directorates: Academic and Professional Studies, and Health and Vocational Studies, where all the higher education provision is located. At the time of the review, there were 166 full-time students on higher education programmes. There are 14 teaching staff delivering the higher education awards.

At the time of the review, the provider offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath their awarding body and organisations (with student numbers shown in brackets):

Association of Business Executives

- Postgraduate Extended Diploma in Leadership and Management in the Health and Social Care Sector (level 7) (7)

¹ www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/tier-4.

² www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx.

ATHE

- Postgraduate Diploma in Business Management (level 7) (3)

Chartered Institute of Management Accountants

- Test of Professional Competence in Management Accountancy (level 7) (10)

Edexcel

- HND in Business Management (level 5) (59)
- HND in Computing and Systems Development (level 5) (15)
- HND in Health and Social Care (level 5) (55)

The Organisation for Tourism and Hospitality Management

- Diploma in Tourism and Hospitality Management (level 6) (8)

Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations

- Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (level 4) (0)

Management Development Partnership (an affiliated institution of the University of the West of England, Bristol)

- BSc (Hons) in Business Management (level 6) (9)

The provider's stated responsibilities

The College has the following responsibilities devolved from each of its awarding body and organisations: student recruitment, admission and guidance; staff development to support teaching and assessment; teaching and learning; library and learning resources; student feedback and the accuracy of public information. There is shared responsibility with the awarding body and organisations for providing programme and module information. The awarding body and organisations are responsible for programme content and in some cases setting and marking student assessments. On programmes awarded by Edexcel, Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR), the Association of Business Executives (ABE) and ATHE, the College has responsibility for setting and marking assessments.

Recent developments

The range of provision has been stable for the past few years, although student numbers have fallen significantly since 2010 as a consequence of student visa policy changes. There has also been an associated reduction in staff numbers. The College became an approved centre for the delivery of Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) awards in 2012. Following BAC reaccreditation in 2011, building work has taken place to improve and extend student facilities.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on higher education programmes at the provider were invited to present a submission to the review team. A written submission was presented and drew on the feedback from student representative meetings and feedback given to the student committee formed to facilitate the development of the submission. The submission was written by students. It was well devised and presented, addressed all the significant aspects of the students' experience and helped the reviewers to develop their agendas for the visit. The review team also held valuable meetings with students at the preparatory meeting and during the visit.

Detailed findings about City of London Business College

1 Academic standards

How effectively does the provider fulfil its responsibilities for the management of academic standards?

1.1 The management arrangements for academic standards are effective. Higher education is managed by the Director of Academic and Professional Studies and the Director of Health and Vocational Studies working closely with the Director of Operations. The College delivers higher education programmes through a departmental structure overseen by the curriculum directors for professional studies and health and vocational studies. Within departments, team leaders coordinate a team of lecturers, tutors, assessors and internal verifiers for the delivery of programmes.

1.2 Directors are members of the College's Senior Management Team, which meets regularly and is chaired by the Principal. Directors also meet to consider higher education and there are regular programme team meetings which provide oversight of standards and the progress of students. Directors have responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the provision they offer and draw on a range of mechanisms for assuring the oversight of standards, including annual programme monitoring, internal verification of assessment processes, teaching observation, and scrutiny of feedback from external examiners and students.

1.3 The College undertakes annual programme monitoring. Monitoring reports are developed at departmental level and encompass a number of programmes within a single report. Reports scrutinised by the team demonstrate a rigorous approach to action planning, which can be tracked in subsequent review reports. There is engagement with a range of evidence, including progression and achievement data, external examiners' comments and student feedback. However, there is variability in the rigour with which data and student feedback are used and in the level of analysis of individual programmes within the reports. It is advisable to ensure that the annual programme reviews fully and consistently utilise data and student feedback in the review and evaluation of all provision.

1.4 In the current management structure, programme monitoring reports are discussed in unrecorded meetings between the curriculum directors and the Director of Operations. The College intends to implement a revised committee structure in 2012 including an Academic Board and a Higher Education Quality Assurance Committee, which will have formal oversight of annual monitoring processes. It is desirable that the College implements the revised committee structure to strengthen the oversight and reporting on higher education programmes.

1.5 There are well developed and effective mechanisms for communicating with staff and sharing good practice, which make an important contribution to ensuring the effectiveness of the management of academic standards. The team judges this to be good practice. Guidance for academic staff on policies and procedures to support academic standards is provided in the comprehensive Quality Assurance Manual. Lecturers also receive a tutor course handbook containing programme and module specifications and details of assessment. Regular tutor planning days enable managers and tutors from across the College to reflect on external examiner and student feedback, discuss and share information about higher education provision and contribute to the development of policy and practice. Staff understanding and communication are also facilitated through standardisation meetings on the Edexcel programmes, the use of the virtual learning environment to share resources, team teaching across programmes and peer observation of teaching.

How effectively are external reference points used in the management of academic standards?

1.6 The College is making effective use of external reference points. The programme specifications and syllabus outlines provided by the awarding body and organisations demonstrate that the award levels are appropriately mapped to the relevant external reference points, principally the Qualifications and Credit Framework and *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*. There are clear lines of communication with the awarding body and organisations to support engagement with external reference points. The College is careful to ensure that staff understand and operate to the approved curricula, disseminating relevant updating information promptly as provided by the awarding body and organisations and external examiners.

1.7 The College has a range of policies and procedures to support good practice in the management of academic standards in such areas as assessment, student complaints and appeals, but has largely been dependent on its awarding body and organisations for information and use of the Academic Infrastructure and sections of the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code of practice*). Internal awareness is developing in the context of dialogue with awarding body and organisation representatives. Formal assessment boards are being introduced on Edexcel awards, following the recommendation of external examiners to align the programmes more closely with the *Code of practice*, *Section 6: Assessment of students*. However, there are opportunities to further strengthen aspects of practice. For example, students report some variability in the timing of the provision of assessment tasks across programmes and the College does not have a formal policy defining the length of time for feedback and the return of students' assessed work. Provision of information regarding procedures for dealing with suspected unfair practice in assessment should be clarified (see paragraph 3.4). In order to promote consistency and further secure academic standards across the provision, it is recommended as desirable that the College considers ways of raising staff awareness of the Academic Infrastructure and relevant sections of the *Code of practice*.

How does the provider use external moderation, verification or examining to assure academic standards?

1.8 The College has responsibility for setting and marking assessments on programmes awarded by Edexcel, OCR, ABE and ATHE. There are clear procedures for internal verification and moderation. The team's scrutiny of a sample of students' assessed work confirmed that assessments are clearly designed, appropriate to the academic level, and enable students to achieve the programme learning outcomes. Clear marking criteria enable internal markers and external examiners to distinguish between different categories of achievement. The marking processes are transparent and secure. The College is taking steps to improve the quality of written feedback to students on some modules in response to external examiners' feedback.

1.9 The provision makes effective use of external examiners and verifiers to assure academic standards. External examiners, appointed by the awarding organisations, attend the College to sample assessments and confirm internal verification and moderation. External examiners' reports are discussed by directors and programme teams, and inform the annual departmental programme reviews. The College is responsive to external examiners' recommendations and the examiners' reports confirm the actions taken.

The review team has **confidence** in the provider's management of its responsibilities for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of its awarding body and organisations.

2 Quality of learning opportunities

How effectively does the provider fulfil its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities?

2.1 The arrangements for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities are generally effective. The College has a considerable range of delegated responsibilities in relation to the quality of learning opportunities. These include student recruitment, guidance, admission, and induction; teaching; setting, marking and providing feedback on student assessment on some programmes; library and learning resources; staff development to support teaching and assessment; collecting and acting upon student feedback and opinion. The internal management arrangements are overseen by the Principal and directors, and are broadly as described for academic standards in paragraphs 1.1 to 1.5.

2.2 Evaluation of the quality of learning opportunities is incorporated into the annual programme monitoring and action planning process, and includes an explicit focus on the student experience, learning resources, staff development and equal opportunities. Student attendance and progress is closely monitored throughout the year. Evidence from the student written submission, as well as discussion with students, confirms that, generally, students are happy with the learning environment, teaching and resources.

How effectively are external reference points used in the management and enhancement of learning opportunities?

2.3 The use of external reference points is broadly as described for academic standards in paragraphs 1.7 and 1.8. As a condition of BAC reaccreditation in 2011, the College has further developed its teaching and learning facilities. Approval and reapproval events, as well as continuous monitoring and feedback through external verification and moderation processes, ensure that the College complies with awarding body and organisation requirements in the delivery and development of programmes. The College works with the UK National Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) to assure best practice in the admission of students. A recent decision to change awarding organisations for the delivery of computing programmes was driven by the College's desire to ensure that its provision is fully aligned to the quality standards and requirements of the Qualifications and Credit Framework.

How does the provider assure itself that the quality of teaching and learning is being maintained and enhanced?

2.4 The College has effective mechanisms that report on the quality of teaching and learning, drawing on the annual monitoring process, information arising from the observation of teaching, as well as external examiner and student feedback.

2.5 There are clear expectations with regard to tutor responsibilities for lesson planning and the delivery of an agreed scheme of work for each programme. Each scheme of work is monitored by the Student Support Officer at regular intervals to ensure that planned teaching and learning activities are being delivered. Graded teaching observations are undertaken by the curriculum directors to monitor lesson planning, use of resources, relevance to the scheme of work, and the quality of teaching. All new members of staff are observed shortly after joining the College and established members of staff on an annual basis. Areas for development are recorded by the observer on a feedback form and discussed with the member of staff being observed. The College has recently introduced a system of ungraded peer observation as a further quality improvement measure. Staff confirmed that peer review

is a useful opportunity to enhance support for developing teaching and to share good practice.

2.6 The College is committed to the collection and use of student feedback to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. Student views are sought through a range of mechanisms, including module surveys and reviews, student representation on programme committees, and more informal means of feedback, such as suggestion boxes and contact with staff in the classroom. Also, there are regular cross-college student representative meetings attended by the Student Support Officer and the curriculum directors. The minutes of meetings are circulated and made available on the College noticeboards. Students confirmed that the College is responsive to their feedback on teaching and learning, and provided examples of changes that had been made. This includes increased staff supervision of the library and changes to staffing arrangements. In their written submission to the review team, students recommended that the College publicises the actions taken in response to their feedback.

How does the provider assure itself that students are supported effectively?

2.7 An appropriate range of mechanisms and procedures are in place to ensure that students receive a high level of academic and welfare support. Student guidance arrangements, including pre-entry guidance and induction, are effective. All students are interviewed and receive an induction to their programme. They are provided with a student induction handbook, which includes general details relating to enrolment, finance, attendance, accommodation, leisure, and administrative matters. The College undertakes initial skills assessment to ensure that students are enrolled on to the right programmes. Students confirmed that they found the pre-entry guidance and induction helpful and comprehensive.

2.8 Support for students while studying is thorough and addresses a range of needs. The College makes considerable study skills guidance available to students. All students have an individual learning plan, which is used to monitor their progress and ensure that they receive appropriate support during their studies. Regular tutorials are provided to assist students in the development of their assignments and examination preparation. Students praised the easy access to tutors, the additional help that is provided for study skills and the time spent by tutors explaining the requirements of assessment tasks and providing examination advice. Careers information, advice and guidance, and a range of welfare support are also available. Charity, social events and other community relationships have been developed to assist students in adapting to life in a foreign country. The provision of a comprehensive system of support which addresses the academic and welfare needs of all higher education students represents good practice.

What are the provider's arrangements for staff development to maintain and/or enhance the quality of learning opportunities?

2.9 The management and delivery of staff development involves a broadly effective combination of College, awarding partner and staff-directed activities. The College provides continuing professional development opportunities and encourages staff to engage in external events. Staff participate in development events organised by the awarding body and organisations. Regular tutor planning days and standardisation meetings held by the College also contribute to staff development. Lecturing staff are very well qualified and in some cases combine teaching with ongoing or recent professional practice experience. A variety of individual examples of engagement in higher level academic study and scholarly projects appropriate to support higher education teaching and learning was provided to the team. This includes undertaking master's level qualifications and contributing to the writing of textbooks. The College encourages lecturers to undertake formal teacher training and

makes places available to staff on the teacher training qualifications which it delivers, awarded by OCR. Staff development records are maintained. All new members of staff receive an induction.

2.10 The development needs of academic staff are identified through classroom observations, feedback from external examiners and verifiers, and in response to the requirements of the awarding body and organisations and developments in the syllabus outlines of programmes. The College does not have a formal staff development or performance review policy. These arrangements are satisfactory at present. However, in order to ensure that staff knowledge and skills are maintained, it is recommended as desirable that the College adopts a more formal approach to staff development and performance review to ensure that all needs are identified.

How effectively does the provider ensure that learning resources are accessible to students and sufficient to enable them to achieve the learning outcomes?

2.11 Resources for programmes are reviewed and determined through the annual business process in which academic and service area staff take part. The suitability and accessibility of learning resources are scrutinised during the approval process for awards and reviewed subsequently through the awarding body and organisations, and College periodic and annual monitoring processes.

2.12 All core texts to support programmes are available in the College's library. The College has taken steps to extend the availability of library resources by becoming a registered inter-library loan centre and ensuring that students are introduced to the resources of the British Library as part of their induction. Students on the programme awarded by the University of the West of England, Bristol, also have the opportunity of using the electronic learning resources available through the University library. The College is responsive to the views of students in its management of learning resources. For example, it has increased staff supervision of the library in response to student concerns about obtaining access to books and securing the provision from theft.

2.13 The College is developing its virtual learning environment to support teaching and learning and to communicate information. The review of the virtual environment and discussions with staff and students indicate that practice is variable in relation to the development of individual programme virtual learning environments. Students report favourably on the availability of assignment details and other study materials through the virtual learning environments, but noted inconsistency in the availability of material across programme areas. There is no College policy or guidelines on the extent to which programmes are required to develop virtual learning environment support. The team considers it desirable that the College reviews and monitors its virtual learning environment provision, and develops clear policies and requirements to ensure it provides parity of support for students in all programme areas.

The review team has **confidence** that the provider is fulfilling its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of the intended learning opportunities it provides for students.

3 Public information

How effectively does the provider's public information communicate to students and other stakeholders about the higher education it provides?

3.1 The College provides clear and accurate information about its programmes for potential and existing students. Under the terms of its agreements with the awarding body and organisations the College has considerable responsibility for publishing information relating to its higher education provision. The College produces a comprehensive higher education prospectus, which provides information on individual programmes, including entry requirements, programme content and assessment. The College website also provides information about programmes, as well as guidance on visas, accommodation and living costs, facilities and support services for students; The Higher Education Prospectus is available for download. There is a facility for online applications. The website contains clear identification of the College partnership arrangements with the awarding body and organisations. College news and developments are also featured.

3.2 A helpful range of approaches is used to ensure that students are well informed about academic matters. All students receive a student induction handbook containing information about attendance and absence regulations, the College calendar, fees, health and safety procedures and procedures for making complaints and appeals. The handbook is effective in most areas. In their meeting with the team, students confirmed their appreciation of the handbook and demonstrated knowledge of a broad range of regulations and procedures, including those relating to complaints and appeals.

3.3 All awards have a programme handbook containing information about the course content and learning objectives derived from the programme specifications and syllabus outlines of the awarding body and organisations. The College uses its own template for programme handbooks, with the exception of the BSc (Hons) Business Management which is provided by the University of the West of England, Bristol. The handbooks produced by the College are informative, but vary in the range of information provided. For example, the handbook for HNC/D in Health and Social Care contains only course content details, whereas the handbooks for HNC/D in Business and Computing contain, in addition, the assessment criteria and sections regarding learning support, unfair practice, referencing, and programme and assessment calendars. It is desirable that the College implements a common template for programme handbooks to promote consistency and ensure that all students are effectively supported.

3.4 Information for staff and students on plagiarism and other forms of unfair practice is provided in tutor handbooks, student induction handbooks and programme handbooks. External examiners' reports comment positively on the rigour with which the College's policy on plagiarism is clarified to the students and the students who met the team confirmed their understanding of academic malpractice. However, there is some inconsistency, and in some cases a lack of clarity, in the written information provided to students and staff regarding procedures to deal with suspected cases of unfair practice. Nor is it apparent how procedures relate to the requirements of the awarding body and organisations. It is advisable that the College formulates and publicises procedures to address suspected plagiarism and other forms of unfair practice, which are consistent with awarding body and organisations requirements.

3.5 A range of useful information is published for staff, including a quality assurance manual, a tutor handbook for each programme and a staff handbook. The College is reviewing and updating the Quality Assurance Manual to more fully reflect the range of provision offered by the College and the policies and procedures which apply to higher education.

How effective are the provider's arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of information it has responsibility for publishing?

3.6 There are clearly understood processes in place which contribute to assuring the accuracy and completeness of public information. An agreed schedule, with clear allocation of responsibilities and deadlines, provides a framework for the review and publication of key documents.

3.7 The production of publicity and marketing information is coordinated centrally by the Director of Operations. The Prospectus is planned in advance with curriculum directors and those responsible at programme level to ensure that course information is accurate. Updating and revision of student handbooks is undertaken regularly and overseen by the curriculum directors and the Director of Operations. The awarding body and organisations contribute to the review of public information through spot-checks and the scrutiny of information during external verifiers' visits and reapproval activities. Students consider the Prospectus and website to be accurate, informative and easy to understand.

3.8 The design, revision and updating of programme virtual learning environments is the responsibility of staff teams. Use of the virtual learning environment as a means of communication to provide information to students is good. However, there is scope to develop a more consistent approach towards using it as a repository for official course information and extend its use across all programmes (see paragraph 2.13).

The team concludes that **reliance can be placed** on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the provider is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

Action plan³

City of London Business College action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight September 2012						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The review team identified the following areas of good practice that are worthy of wider dissemination within the provider:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> well developed and effective mechanisms for communicating with staff and sharing good practice (paragraph 1.5) 	<p>Use staff meetings, email and virtual learning environment to share and encourage good practice</p> <p>Ensure that all decisions agreed at committee meetings and through teaching observation are formally recorded</p>	<p>Ongoing staff meetings and termly standardisation and tutor planning days</p> <p>From November 2012</p> <p>November 2012</p>	<p>Director of Operations and directors of studies</p> <p>Director of Operations</p>	<p>Positive feedback from staff, following performance reviews</p> <p>Improved performance in one-to-one and peer observations</p> <p>Student surveys reporting higher satisfaction rates</p>	<p>Senior Management Team</p>	<p>Student surveys</p> <p>One-to-one and peer observation reports</p> <p>Annual programme reviews</p> <p>Staff appraisals</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> carefully developed and comprehensive academic and 	Ensure regular updates (termly) to student handbook	Termly from January 2013	Administration Manager and Student Support	Increased satisfaction ratings in student	Senior Management Team	Analysis of feedback from student surveys

³ The provider has been required to develop this action plan to follow up on good practice and address any recommendations arising from the review. QAA monitors progress against the action plan, in conjunction with the provider's awarding body and organisations.

welfare support (paragraph 2.8).	Ensure regular review of virtual learning environment to ensure information is current, useful and all students have access Termly review of the academic calendar to ensure updated academic and social events are listed Ensure adherence to '100 per cent induction' policy Synchronise course handbooks to provide more consistent support and guidance across all courses	Termly from January 2013 Termly from January 2013 Ongoing January 2013	Officer Administration Manager Directors of studies and Student Support Officer Administration Manager Directors of studies and Director of Operations	surveys Increased student interactions on virtual learning environment Standardised handbooks being increasingly referenced by students on programme	Senior Management Team Directors of studies	Data analysis of student submissions in virtual learning environment Annual programme reviews
Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is advisable for the provider to:						
• ensure that the annual programme reviews fully and consistently utilise data and student	Augment annual programme review structure to incorporate new section on student	March 2013	Director of Operations	Increased levels of robustness and rigour introduced to annual	Senior Management Team	Success rates Student surveys

	feedback in the review and evaluation of all provision (paragraph 1.3)	feedback Analyse data following each board and use this information in annual programme review	Six monthly	Directors of studies, Director of Operations	programme review through greater reflection of student voice Conclusions of reviews supported by data		
• formulate and publicise procedures that are consistent with awarding body and organisation requirements to address suspected plagiarism and other forms of unfair practice (paragraph 3.4).	Review College policies and procedures to address suspected plagiarism and other forms of unfair practice, to be consistent and in line with the individual awarding partner's requirement	January 2013	Quality Assurance Coordinator	Clear and relevant guidance regarding procedures for dealing with suspected unfair practice in assessment	Senior Management Team	Course handbooks	
Desirable		Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is desirable for the provider to:							
• implement the revised committee structure to strengthen oversight and reporting on higher education programmes (paragraph 1.4)	Ensure that the Academic Board, the Quality Committee and the Programmes Delivery Committee meet regularly	January 2013	Senior Management Team	Improved academic processes for enhancing programme planning and quality	Senior Management Team	Annual programme reviews Student surveys comparing September term to later terms in 2013	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> raise staff awareness of the Academic Infrastructure and relevant sections of the <i>Code of practice</i> (paragraph 1.7) 	<p>Review policy on assessment through referencing the <i>Code of practice</i>, <i>Section 6: Assessment of students</i> and relevant awarding body or organisation requirements and procedures</p> <p>Raise administrative and higher education staff awareness of the <i>Code of practice</i> through staff meetings, training and reviews</p>	<p>January 2013</p> <p>Ongoing from November 2012</p>	<p>Directors of studies, Director of Operations</p> <p>Director of Operations, directors of studies, Tutor Support Officer</p>	<p>Increased rigour in assessment practices</p> <p>Improved motivation of students</p> <p>Increased capacity of tutor group</p>	<p>Senior Management Team</p>	<p>Student surveys</p> <p>Individual learning plan reviews</p> <p>Staff reviews</p> <p>Annual programme monitoring</p>
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> adopt a more formal approach to staff development and performance review to ensure that all needs are identified (paragraph 2.10) 	Institute a formal staff performance review policy	January 2013	Quality Committee	<p>Increased capacity of tutor group</p> <p>Increased motivation of students enjoying enhanced lecturing techniques</p> <p>Improved staff retention</p>	<p>Senior Management Team</p>	<p>Staff reviews</p> <p>Student surveys</p> <p>Annual programme monitoring</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop clear policies and requirements to review and monitor 	Develop the virtual learning environment policy and guidelines outlining minimum	January 2013	Director of Operations	Consistency in the availability of materials across the programmes	<p>Senior Management Team</p>	<p>Student surveys showing similar approval ratings across all</p>

	the virtual learning environment to provide parity of support for students in all programme areas (paragraphs 2.13 and 3.8)	standards and good practice to ensure suitable cross-college programme support			on the virtual learning environments Parity of support for students in all programme areas Increased student interactions on virtual learning environment		courses
• implement a common template for programme handbooks to promote consistency and provide effective support for all students (paragraph 3.3).	Develop a common template for handbooks in all the programmes, respective of an awarding body or organisation	January 2013	Quality Assurance Coordinator	Students benefitting from effective support on all programmes Improved knowledge and understanding of College and awarding body and organisations' procedures	Senior Management Team	Student surveys Annual programme monitoring	

About QAA

QAA is the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. QAA's mission is to safeguard standards and improve the quality of UK higher education.

QAA's aims are to:

- meet students' needs and be valued by them
- safeguard standards in an increasingly diverse UK and international context
- drive improvements in UK higher education
- improve public understanding of higher education standards and quality.

QAA conducts reviews of higher education institutions and publishes reports on the findings. QAA also publishes a range of guidance documents to help safeguard standards and improve quality.

More information about the work of QAA is available at: www.qaa.ac.uk.

More detail about Review for Educational Oversight can be found at:
www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/types-of-review/tier-4.

Glossary

This glossary explains terms used in this report. You can find a fuller glossary at: www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary. Formal definitions of key terms can be found in the *Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook*⁴

Academic Infrastructure Guidance developed and agreed by the higher education community and published by QAA, which is used by institutions to ensure that their courses meet national expectations for academic standards and that students have access to a suitable environment for learning (academic quality). It consists of four groups of reference points: the **frameworks for higher education qualifications**, the **subject benchmark statements**, the **programme specifications** and the **Code of practice**. Work is underway (2011-12) to revise the Academic Infrastructure as the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

academic quality A comprehensive term referring to how, and how well, institutions manage teaching and learning opportunities to help students progress and succeed.

academic standards The standards set and maintained by institutions for their courses and expected for their awards. See also **threshold academic standard**.

awarding body A body with the authority to award academic qualifications located on the **framework for higher education qualifications**, such as diplomas or degrees.

awarding organisation An organisation with the authority to award academic qualifications located on the Qualifications and Credit Framework for England and Northern Ireland (these qualifications are at levels 1 to 8, with levels 4 and above being classed as 'higher education').

Code of practice *The Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education*, published by QAA: a set of interrelated documents giving guidance for higher education institutions.

designated body An organisation that has been formally appointed to perform a particular function.

differentiated judgements In a Review for Educational Oversight, separate judgements respectively for the provision validated by separate awarding bodies.

enhancement Taking deliberate steps at institutional level to improve the quality of **learning opportunities**. It is used as a technical term in QAA's audit and review processes.

feature of good practice A positive aspect of the way a higher education institution manages quality and standards, which may be seen as exemplary to others.

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:

⁴ www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx.

The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ) and *The framework for qualifications of higher education institutions in Scotland*.

highly trusted sponsor An education provider that the UK government trusts to admit migrant students from overseas, according to Tier 4 of the UK Border Agency's points-based immigration system. Higher education providers wishing to obtain this status must undergo a successful review by QAA.

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

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

operational definition A formal definition of a term, which establishes exactly what QAA means when using it in reports.

programme (of study) An approved course of study which 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.

provider An institution that offers courses of higher education, typically on behalf of a separate **awarding body or organisation**. In the context of REO, the term means an independent college.

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

reference points Statements and other publications that establish criteria against which performance can be measured. Internal reference points may be used by providers for purposes of self-regulation; external ones are used and accepted throughout the higher education community for the checking of standards and quality.

quality See **academic quality**.

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.

threshold academic standard The minimum standard that a student should reach in order to gain a particular qualification or award, as set out in the **subject benchmark statements** and national qualifications frameworks. Threshold standards are distinct from the standards of performance that students need to achieve in order to gain any particular class of award, for example a first-class bachelor's degree. See also **academic standard**.

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

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