



# Adapted Review for Specific Course Designation by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

## **Delistar Ltd t/a London Institute of Management and Technology**

October 2014

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## Key findings about Delistar Ltd t/a London Institute of Management and Technology

As a result of its adapted Review for Specific Course Designation carried out in October 2014, the QAA review team (the team) considers that there can be **limited confidence** in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the standards of the programmes it offers on behalf of ATHE Ltd and Pearson.

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 these awarding organisations.

The team considers that reliance **can** be placed on the information that the provider produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

### Recommendations

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

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

- implement rigorously its procedures to identify and address academic misconduct and safeguard academic standards (paragraph 1.9).

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

- revise its job descriptions to clearly allocate responsibility for the management of academic standards (paragraph 1.2)
- revise the remits of the committees to ensure that matters relating to academic standards are effectively managed (paragraph 1.3)
- ensure that minutes of meetings fully reflect the monitoring of academic standards (paragraph 1.8)
- ensure that the Quality Enhancement Review report findings are formally action planned and monitored (paragraph 2.2)
- fully implement the new policies and procedures designed to support the enhancement of learning opportunities (paragraph 2.3)
- provide further training for academic staff to enhance the quality and consistency of feedback to students (paragraph 2.9).

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

- develop a single internal verification policy and guidance document (paragraph 1.7)
- develop the virtual learning environment (VLE) as a resource for supporting student learning (2.7).

## About this report

This report presents the findings of the adapted [Review for Specific Course Designation](#)<sup>1</sup> conducted by [QAA](#) at Delistar Ltd t/a London Institute of Management and Technology (the College), which is a privately funded provider of higher education. 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 ATHE Ltd and Pearson. The review was carried out by Mr Peter Hymans, Ms Kausar Malik (reviewers) and Mrs Mandy Hobart (coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the [Review for Specific Course Designation: Handbook, May 2014](#).<sup>2</sup> Evidence in support of the review included copies of policies and procedures, minutes of meetings and programme handbooks and the Independent Schools Inspectorate reports supplied by the College. The team also met staff and students as part of the review visit.

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

- the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code)
- the Credit and Qualifications Framework (QCF).

QAA carries out an adapted review for providers who are also reviewed by another approved body. The *Review for Specific Course Designation: Handbook, May 2014* provides further details.

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

The College was established in 2002 and relocated to its present location in 2006 in Ilford, Essex. It operates on a single campus and benefits from good transport links with central London. The College was initially accredited by the Accreditation Service for International Schools, Colleges and Universities (ASIC) in 2008 and holds current oversight through the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), whose report was published in September 2013. The College had eight students enrolled at the time of the review visit, having had its Tier 4 licence revoked in April 2014.

Provision is accredited by two awarding organisations and includes undergraduate and postgraduate level programmes in business, health and social care management and strategic management. The College's mission is to 'be an accessible, dynamic and responsive community of higher education, enhancing lives, communities, disciplines and professions and secure the best possible outcomes for its students and staff'.

At the time of the review, the provider offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath their awarding organisations:

### **ATHE Ltd**

Level 6 Diploma in Health and Social Care Management (0)

Level 6 Graduate Diploma in Management Studies (1)

Level 7 Diploma in Strategic Management (1)

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<sup>1</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/RSCD.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/RSCD.aspx)

<sup>2</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2707](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2707)

## **Pearson**

Higher National Certificate in Business, Level 4 (0)  
Higher National Diploma in Business, Level 5 (6)

## **The provider's stated responsibilities**

The College is responsible for the management of admissions, assessment and internal verification for all its programmes. The College does not have awarding powers for any of the qualifications it offers. The overarching responsibility for the maintenance of academic standards lies with the awarding organisations. The College has responsibility for setting and marking assignments for the Pearson BTEC higher nationals and the ATHE Ltd diplomas.

## **Recent developments**

The College gained accreditation with Pearson in 2013 and offers the HNC/D in Business alongside the ATHE Ltd provision. The College is accredited to offer the Institute of Commercial Management qualifications, but has not done so since 2013. The loss of the Tier 4 licence has severely impacted on the College's ability to recruit students, and has resulted in few programmes being offered.

## **Students' contribution to the review**

Students studying on higher education programmes at the provider were invited to present a submission to the review team. No student submission was provided. However, students met the review team during the visit which the team found very informative.

## Detailed findings about Delistar Ltd t/a London Institute for Management and Technology

### 1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The College understands its responsibilities for the management of academic standards as required by its awarding organisations. The awarding organisations are responsible for the determination of learning outcomes and specifications which are referenced to the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF).

1.2 The College has recently restructured due to the reduction in student numbers. This has resulted in the loss of the Director of Studies role, with responsibilities being assumed by the Principal. The College is clear on the responsibilities of individual members of staff although this is not always evident in the documentation, as some policies and procedures refer to the older structure. None of the current roles have explicit responsibility for academic standards although there are indirect references to responsibilities within the job descriptions. It is **advisable** for the College to revise its job descriptions to clearly allocate responsibility for the management of academic standards.

1.3 The College committee structure has been revised in the last year to create an academic board. The remit of the Academic Board sets out its responsibility for the oversight of academic matters, but there is limited evidence of its implementation. Minutes of Academic Board meetings do not record discussion of academic standards, but rather a review of more general teaching and learning. While the terms of reference of the Quality Enhancement Panel (QEP) do not explicitly include oversight of academic standards, the College's Quality Enhancement Handbook 2014 does go into some detail regarding QEP's responsibility for assessment, verification and academic misconduct. Minutes of the QEP meetings, however, make no specific reference to matters relating to assessment. It is **advisable** for the College to revise the remits of the committees to ensure that matters relating to academic standards are effectively managed.

#### How effectively does the College make use of external reference points to manage academic standards?

1.4 The College makes appropriate references to external reference points in the context of its responsibilities for the management of academic standards. Staff are aware that the qualifications offered by the College have been written by the awarding organisations with reference to the QCF. The former Director of Studies, who is now a part-time tutor, has undertaken an exercise to reference the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, including Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards, to College policies and practices but the outcome of this process is not clear. Senior management within the current structure have some awareness of the external references used in the development of its policies relating to teaching, learning and assessment, and plan to continue to align policies with the Quality Code.

1.5 The College has been subject to inspection for educational oversight by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) since 2012. The College has used the expectations of the inspection process as a guide to its academic development with a comprehensive action plan which is updated appropriately. Actions within the ISI plan relate to both academic standards and quality issues, including assessment, and demonstrate that the College is making progress

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

1.6 The College is responsible for the setting of assessments, first marking and internal verification for all its programmes. Assignment briefs are clear and appropriately managed. The assignment briefs meet expectations with regard to format and content and allow students to demonstrate their achievement of the learning outcomes. Briefs include a statement on plagiarism which is signed by the students, although not all students are aware of this. The Internal Verification Policy states that the College will use the assignment brief checking serviced offered by the awarding organisations but this has not yet taken place.

1.7 The College has in place procedures for the internal verification of student work. The Student Handbook 2014-2015 includes the statement that the College seeks to use internet text-matching software to reduce plagiarism and gives actions that must be taken should academic misconduct be discovered. However, the College has not yet fully implemented its own procedures. Internal verification of assessed work is carried out by an external consultant using the College's two policies, the Internal Verifier Sampling Strategy and Plans Policy and the Internal Verification Policy. The two policies include different guidance, for example, in relation to the size of sampled work to be verified. It would be **desirable** for the College to develop a single internal verification policy and guidance document.

1.8 Oversight of the College's internal verification processes is weak. Neither the Academic Board nor the QEP maintains oversight of internal verification, and the terms of reference of the QEP does not include oversight of academic standards. However, the Quality Enhancement Handbook indicates that the responsibility for the assessment process overall lies with the QEP. Minutes of the panel meetings, however, do not reflect any discussion of internal verification. Job descriptions of senior staff do not include responsibilities for the oversight of the internal verification process. The College confirms that all matters relating to internal verification are the responsibility of the external consultant, with the Principal having oversight of the process. Documentary evidence provided does not confirm that such oversight is taking place. It is **advisable** that the College ensures that minutes of meetings fully reflect the monitoring of academic standards.

1.9 The implementation of the procedures for the management of academic standards is weak. Neither the Assessor nor the Internal Verifier identified academic misconduct issues within the student work reviewed by the team. Cases of plagiarism were identified by the team through the scrutiny of marked and internally verified work, and discussed with the Principal and Internal Verifier. Over 50 per cent of the candidates whose work was sampled by the team included large amounts of unreferenced text which had been copied from other sources. The level of the academic content is well above that which could be expected from students at levels 4 and 5, and it was very clear that this was not the original work of the students. The Pearson standards verifier for this programme has yet to be appointed by the awarding organisation. At the time of the review visit, there had not been any visits by external verifiers from either of the awarding organisations and it is unlikely that a visit from the Pearson standards verifier will take place before the students complete the majority of their studies. The College's failure to detect academic misconduct and the current absence of external verifier input is placing academic standards, and therefore also student progression, at risk. It is **essential** for the College to implement rigorously its procedures to identify and address academic misconduct and safeguard academic standards.

1.10 In summary, the College's implementation of its policies and procedures for the management of academic standards requires improvement. Oversight of academic standards is informal and not fully reflected in the remits of committees or individuals. Recent staffing changes have further impacted on the College's management of its

responsibilities for academic standards. The College's failure to detect academic misconduct by students is putting academic standards at risk.

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

## 2 Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1 The College has clear procedures for the management and enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities, and these have been amended to reflect the current organisational structure. The Academic Board is responsible for maintaining oversight of the quality of teaching and learning. With the loss of the Director of Studies role, the responsibility for the management of teaching staff, the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, and continuing professional development now rests with the Principal. The Principal also currently undertakes teaching observations and encourages staff to engage in peer review. The Principal retains overall responsibility for the production of the Quality Enhancement Annual Review Report, which includes an evaluation of student feedback, teaching and learning, and programme monitoring and review. The report is presented to the senior management team, Academic Board and the Governors of the College and supports the review of the quality of teaching and learning and identifies student satisfaction with their learning experiences.

2.2 The College has a comprehensive Quality Enhancement Handbook to support the management of the quality of learning opportunities; however implementation of procedures is limited. Peer observations and observations of teaching by senior staff take place, but there is no formal recording of emerging good practice or areas for development. The reduction in student numbers has resulted in very few classes being run and student support has been monitored informally. There are no annual monitoring reports or associated action plans as yet for the newly introduced programmes. The monitoring of education activities and reviews takes place in annual meetings of the QEP, and a number of clear recommendations to address findings are presented. However, there is limited evidence of tracking of action points or the monitoring of the impact on the enhancement of quality of learning and teaching. It is **advisable** for the College to ensure that the Quality Enhancement Review report findings are formally action planned and monitored.

2.3 A number of appropriate policies and procedures have been developed to assist the College in managing the quality of learning opportunities, although these are not yet fully implemented. Policy developments include a teaching and learning policy, a staff development policy and an assessment marking, grading and examinations policy and procedure. These policies, along with the key guidance and expectations summarised in the Quality Enhancement Handbook, provide a framework within which the College can manage its responsibilities for the quality of the learning opportunities it offers. References to policies and procedures are included in the Student Handbook and Staff Handbook as appropriate, to ensure all staff and students are aware of quality management processes and requirements. These policies have not been fully implemented and evaluated due to the interruptions in teaching caused by the loss of the Tier 4 licence. It is **advisable** that the College fully implement the new policies and procedures designed to support the enhancement of learning opportunities.

2.4 Procedures for the selection, appointment and monitoring of teaching staff are clear and effective. All teachers are appointed on the basis of an assessment of their teaching at interview, and are subsequently monitored through the newly developed teaching observation scheme. Students are invited to provide feedback on the micro-teaching sessions which inform the final employment offer decision. Teachers are also regularly observed throughout the year. Students report that they are well supported by both their teachers and the Student Welfare Office, and can approach them at any time for advice and guidance. Relationships between staff and students are good and the College has an open-door policy for its students.

### **How effectively does the College make use of external reference points to manage and enhance learning opportunities?**

2.5 The College makes satisfactory use of external reference points in the management of learning opportunities. The College engages with its awarding organisations' guidance and is undertaking work to align its policies and procedures with the Quality Code. The College also uses the guidance from the ISI reports and visits to inform its management of learning opportunities and to establish priorities for the development and review of policies. For example, the identified need for improvement in the quality of the governance and management identified in the 2012 report has led to a review of committee structures, remits and responsibilities.

### **How does the College engage students in its quality assurance processes?**

2.6 The College effectively engages with students as part of the assurance of the quality of teaching and learning it offers. Staff work closely with the small number of students on all key aspects of student support and learning opportunities. The College receives regular student feedback through both formal and informal meetings, although students are not represented on committees. Students are also able to make use of a comment box (anonymously), or can approach the Student Welfare Officer with any issues. Matters raised are reported to the Principal who is able to take appropriate action, as required. Ongoing concerns and strategies are discussed at staff meetings and responses and actions agreed. The student voice is also formally recorded and analysed through the student feedback questionnaires and key points inform the Quality Enhancement Annual Reviews. Feedback collated via the student feedback questionnaires indicates a good level of student satisfaction with their learning and teaching experiences.

2.7 The College is also able to engage with students through the VLE. Students receive copies of teaching presentations, and messages from lecturers and staff about amendments to timetables, assessment schedules, external visits and other event information. Students are also able to email their tutors or members of the senior management team with any questions or concerns. As yet there is very little information on the VLE on outcomes of external visits or reviews or links to external resources to support teaching and quality. It would be **desirable** for the College to continue to develop the VLE as a resource for supporting student learning.

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

2.8 Staff development is recognised as a priority by the College to ensure support for the delivery of teaching and learning, particularly in relation to newly introduced qualifications. Staff attend awarding organisation events to ensure that they are familiar with the programme requirements and quality assurance. The College has identified continuing professional development as important in its Staff Development Policy and this is supported by the College management team and valued by staff. The College runs in-house staff



development events which focus on identified priorities. These have recently included formative and summative assessment of student work and building familiarity with the Quality Code.

2.9 Internal review and verification of student work and associated feedback remains an area for staff development. The team found that the internal verification of student work and associated feedback is variable, and in several cases lacks clarity. As discussed in paragraph 1.9, marking and internal verification does not always identify or address issues of academic malpractice. The quality and range of feedback provided was also found to be variable and in some cases lacking in guidance as to how work can be improved. It is **advisable** that the College provide further training for academic staff to enhance the quality and consistency of feedback to students.

2.10 The College recognises the value of formal staff development in maintaining and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. However, the small number of part-time teaching staff has restricted the range of activities. All teaching and administrative staff are well qualified. All staff participate in an appraisal process, which identifies the professional development requirements of individual staff members. Appraisal reports are sent to the Senior Management Team for review and approval of training in line with College and programme development priorities.

2.11 In summary, a number of clear policies and procedures are in place to support the management of quality of learning opportunities. Implementation of these procedures has, however, been limited by the small number of staff and classes being run. There is limited evidence of formal action plans or formal monitoring in response to the Quality Enhancement Review report findings. The quality of teaching and support is valued by students as reflected in their positive feedback. The team considers that the overall management of the quality of learning opportunities is satisfactory.

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 Information about learning opportunities

#### How effective are the College's arrangements for assuring that information about learning opportunities is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy?

3.1 The College has a clear Publications Policy and Procedure which sets out the aims, staff responsibilities and mechanisms for the production, modification and updating of information. Information for inclusion on the College website is checked by the Vice-Principal and is authorised by the Principal. Information related to advertising and College news is drafted by the Senior Administrator and approved by the Principal. Programme handbook content is produced by programme tutors drawing on awarding organisation specifications, and where formerly checked by the Director of Studies, is now checked for accuracy by the Vice-Principal and signed off by the Principal. Where the mechanism for the production and review of information is set out in the Publications Policy, the implementation of the review of information content is largely informal due to the small numbers of staff working at the College, with the exception of authorisation of website changes.

3.2 The College provides clear and appropriate information about the learning opportunities it offers. Information about learning opportunities is available to staff, students and other stakeholders on the College website. This includes a prospectus and student

handbook, along with a number of College policies and visa information, all of which can be downloaded. Students confirm that the information on the website is accurate and representative of their experience of the College. The College also provides students with a good induction pack and detailed programme handbooks, and students confirm they are clear about learning outcomes and assessment requirements.

3.3 Students are not formally involved in checking the suitability or accuracy of information. However, students confirm that they are able to comment on information through informal channels and through the annual student survey. As a result of student feedback, the College has improved the pre-arrival information given to international students. The students confirm that they are able to offer their views on the efficiency of the timetable, communication of course and teaching changes and course organisation. There is a clear procedure for the analysis of student feedback and the College communicates changes through the VLE, emails and via class tutors.

3.4 In summary, the information that the College produces about its learning opportunities is accurate and complete. The College has appropriate systems for the production and monitoring of its information, including that published on the website and in course materials.

The team concludes that reliance **can** be placed on the information that the provider produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

## Action plan<sup>3</sup>

Delistar Ltd t/a London Institute of Management and Technology action plan relating to the Review for Specific Course Designation in October 2014						
Essential	Intended Outcomes	Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes	Target date/s	Action by	Reported to	Evaluation (process or evidence)
The team considers that it is <b>essential</b> for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement rigorously its procedures to identify and address academic misconduct and safeguard academic standards (paragraph 1.9).</li> </ul>	<p>Rigorous internal verification procedure</p> <p>High standard of internal verification to rectify possibility of academic misconduct</p> <p>Support students to understand and put best efforts into producing work</p>	<p>Assessor and internal verifier training with the related awarding organisations</p> <p>Strict implementation of anti-plagiarism policy and enhanced procedures</p> <p>Provide timely support to students and provide help and encouragement to submit original work</p> <p>Provide training and access to anti-plagiarism software to check and submit</p>	31 March 2015	Principal	Senior management	<p>Software purchased</p> <p>Assessor training through awarding organisations for best assessment practices</p> <p>Internal verifier training through awarding organisations</p> <p>External verifier report</p>

<sup>3</sup> The College 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 College's awarding organisations.

		report along with the work before final submission  Further sampling of internal verifier work by DoS and recorded feedback				Guidance for students about anti-plagiarism  DoS feedback on the internal verifier work
<b>Advisable</b>	<b>Intended outcomes</b>	<b>Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes</b>	<b>Target date(s)</b>	<b>Action by</b>	<b>Reported to</b>	<b>Evaluation (process or evidence)</b>
The team considers that it is <b>advisable</b> for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revise its job descriptions to clearly allocate responsibility for the management of academic standards (paragraph 1.2)</li> </ul>	<p>Clarity in responsibilities</p> <p>Clear identification of job responsibilities</p>	<p>Restructuring of organisation</p> <p>Reallocation of job responsibilities</p>	15 March 2015	Senior management	Board of governors	Designated person clearly knows responsibilities and performs them
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revise the remits of the committees to ensure that matters relating to academic standards are</li> </ul>	<p>Clear mandate to a committee responsible for managing academic standards</p> <p>Maintain and improve academic standards</p>	<p>Review terms of reference for academic board to enable it to improve and maintain academic standards</p> <p>Standing agenda item</p>	15 March 2015	Senior management	Board of governors	<p>Academic board improved role to improve academic standards</p> <p>Quality Enhancement</p>

effectively managed (paragraph 1.3)	as per guidance of Quality Code	for continuing review of academic standards				report and recommendation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that minutes of meetings fully reflect the monitoring of academic standards</li> </ul>	<p>Well documented minutes of meetings especially academic board</p> <p>Improve internal quality process</p>	<p>Improve minutes of meeting recording procedure and clear standing agenda of academic and assessment board</p> <p>Improve internal verification oversight process to improve internal quality control</p>	April 2015	Academic board	Principal	<p>External verifier (awarding organisations') report</p> <p>Improve quality process</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that the Quality Enhancement Review report findings are formally action planned and monitored (paragraph 2.2)</li> </ul>	<p>Action plan and progress monitor on Quality Enhancement report</p> <p>Action and monitoring review process</p>	<p>Ensure action plan produces strict mechanism of monitoring progress on action plan</p> <p>Academic board review and monitor action plan</p> <p>Staff complete action within described time frame</p>	March 2015	Academic board	Senior management	<p>Academic board review and confirm all advised action has been addressed and monitor improvement</p> <p>Senior management review improvement in gaps</p> <p>External review reports such as ISI and awarding bodies</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully implement the new policies and procedures designed to support the enhancement of learning opportunities (paragraph 2.3)</li> </ul>	<p>New improved assessment policy</p> <p>Single internal verification policy</p>	<p>Review assessment, grading and marking and internal verification policy</p> <p>Academic board will monitor assessment grading and internal verification policy and procedures</p> <p>Marking, grading and internal verification procedures are transparent and more effort is made to make them available to students by all possible means</p>	<p>14 April 2015</p>	<p>Academic board</p>	<p>Senior management</p>	<p>Learner and assessor fully understand all these policies and procedures</p> <p>No formal complaint about assessment</p> <p>External verifier report and awarding organisations</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide further training for academic staff to enhance the quality and consistency of feedback to students (paragraph 2.9).</li> </ul>	<p>Improve assessment and internal verification quality</p> <p>Improve assessor and internal verification feedback</p>	<p>Arrange training with the awarding organisations to provide internal verification and assessor training</p> <p>Director of studies further samples internally verified work and monitors consistency of feedback</p>	<p>30 April 2015</p>	<p>Principal/ Director of Studies/ Quality Co-ordinator</p>	<p>Senior management</p>	<p>External verifier reports</p> <p>Improved student summative or formative work</p> <p>Anti-plagiarism report</p>

Desirable	Intended outcomes	Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes	Target date/s	Action by	Reported to	Evaluation (process or evidence)
The team considers that it is <b>desirable</b> for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a single internal verification policy and guidance document (paragraph 1.7)</li> </ul>	Internal verification policy	Review both current internal verification policies and develop single internal verification policy  Internal verifiers and assessors receive training from awarding organisations Director of studies will monitor effective use of internal verification policy and procedure	April 2015	Academic board	Senior management	Awarding organisations' external verifier reports confirm internal verification process  College internal quality measure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop the virtual learning environment as a resource for supporting student learning (2.7).</li> </ul>	Develop an integrated learning environment	Develop integrated learning environment or develop bespoke integrated environment with current system	31 August 2015	IT consultant	Senior management	Students using VLE and improve learning support

## 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](http://www.qaa.ac.uk).

More detail about Review of Specific Course Designation can be found at:  
[www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/RSCD.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/RSCD.aspx).



## Glossary

This glossary explains terms used in this report. You can find a fuller glossary at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/glossary](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/glossary). Formal definitions of key terms can be found in the [Review for Specific Course Designation: Handbook, May 2014](#).<sup>4</sup>

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

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

**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).

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

**differentiated judgements** In a Review for Specific Course Designation, separate judgements respectively for the provision validated by separate awarding bodies.

**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 QAA's review processes.

**external examiner** An independent expert appointed by an institution to comment on student achievement in relation to established academic standards and to look at approaches to assessment.

**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*.

**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 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.

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<sup>4</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2707](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2707)

**operational definition** A formal definition of a term, which establishes 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.

**provider(s) (of higher education)** Organisations that deliver higher education. In the UK they may be a degree-awarding body or another organisation that offers programmes of higher education on behalf of degree-awarding bodies or awarding organisations. In the context of Review for Specific Course Designation 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').

**quality** See **academic quality**.

**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. 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.

**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 standards** 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 for higher education qualifications** and **Subject Benchmark Statements**. See also **academic standards**.

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

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