



# **Essex International College Ltd**

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

July 2013

## Key findings about Essex International College Ltd

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in July 2013, 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 programme it offers on behalf of 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 Pearson.

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.

### Good practice

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

- the submission of draft work for formative feedback which helps students prepare for the final summative assessment (paragraph 2.1).

### 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:

- systematically record in the minutes of committee meetings the action taken from previous meetings (paragraph 1.2)
- review the terms of reference of all committees to ensure that responsibilities and reporting lines are clear and consistent (paragraph 1.2)
- implement the annual monitoring procedures and produce a report and action plan for the current academic year (paragraph 1.3)
- monitor the newly implemented management structure to ensure consistency across all centres (paragraph 1.4)
- provide written feedback to students on final assessments (paragraph 2.7)
- clarify the procedures and responsibilities for the maintenance and monitoring of the accuracy of information about learning opportunities and implement them across all centres (paragraph 3.6).

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

- communicate the expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education to all staff and fully integrate them into College policies and procedures (paragraph 1.6)
- further develop the Teaching and Learning Strategy (paragraph 2.4)
- formally record the action plan and decision-making on staff development following tutor evaluation (paragraph 2.5)
- formalise the student representation scheme across all centres (paragraph 2.6)
- timetable regular one-to-one tutorials to ensure that all students are supported effectively (paragraph 2.9).

## About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)<sup>1</sup> (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at Essex International College Ltd (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 Pearson. The review was carried out by Dr Gwynne Harries, Dr Ana-Maria Pascal, Dr Richard Samuels and Mr Alan Soutter (Coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the [Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook](#).<sup>2</sup> Evidence in support of the review included a range of documentation supplied by the provider and its awarding organisation and meetings with staff and students.

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

- the UK Quality Code for Higher Education
- syllabus of the awarding organisation.

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

Essex International College Ltd was established in October 2009 and its head office is in Romford. Teaching commenced in February 2010. Initially, the College provided courses in Accounting (ACCA), an HND (Pearson) and a Postgraduate Diploma in Business (NCFE) to both UK and European Union (EU) and international students. Following the decision of the UK Border Agency to revoke the College's Tier 4 licence, the College decided to focus on the UK and EU markets and revised its provision to offer only the Pearson HND in Business.

In April 2011, the College was subject to a British Accreditation Council (BAC) inspection report which informed the College that the students registered on the NCFE programme were not equipped to take this course and therefore arrangements should be made to transfer the students to another course. It was confirmed that the students had left the College in November 2011. The College had informed the students in October 2011 that the NCFE course had been discontinued, six months after being alerted to the situation by the BAC inspector.

In 2012, the College established subcentres at the London Docklands, Barking, Catford, Shepherd's Bush, Tottenham, Hackney, Woolwich, Peterborough, Portsmouth, Leicester and Birmingham. At inception, the subcentres, with the exception of the Docklands centre, were established as franchises of the College and partnership agreements were entered into with third party colleges and organisations to provide both space and teaching to College students. In April 2013, an addendum was made to each of the agreements to bring the teaching staff and the Academic Coordinator of the subcentres under the employment, and therefore direct line management, of the College.

The College has 1,028 UK and EU registered students.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/educational-oversight](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/educational-oversight)

<sup>2</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx)

At the time of the review, the provider offered the following higher education programme, listed beneath its awarding organisation:

**Pearson**

- HND Business

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

The College's responsibilities are set out in the agreement with the awarding organisation. The College retains responsibility for most of its provision except for programme specifications and intended learning outcomes which is the responsibility of the awarding organisation. The monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is a shared responsibility.

### **Recent developments**

The College significantly expanded its provision in 2012 by establishing 11 subcentres in London and across England which offer the HND Business course.

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

Students studying at the provider were invited to present a submission to the review team. No student submission was submitted prior to the review although 'A survey of student attitudes, experiences and expectations', compiled by the Director of Studies, was submitted. During the visit some students met the review team and engaged in useful discussion.

## Detailed findings about Essex International College Ltd

### 1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The arrangements for the management of academic standards are adequate. Reporting to the Principal, the Director of Studies is responsible for academic standards. He is supported by the Academic Coordinator and the Internal Verifier. Each subcentre also has an academic coordinator who is responsible for the line management of the academic staff. There is a range of mechanisms for maintaining the quality of standards across the centres, including internal moderation and verification that comply with the awarding organisation's regulations.

1.2 The College has a formal committee structure. This includes the Academic Committee which is responsible for academic standards, operational matters and to confirm results. The Terms of Reference of the Academic Committee, however, do not include the finalisation of results and should be amended to reflect this. A Student Welfare Committee monitors student welfare issues and the Attendance Committee addresses student attendance issues with the authority to terminate a student's College registration. In addition, staff meetings take place. Minutes are recorded for all meetings and include action points, although the minutes do not systematically track the status of previous actions. It is **advisable** for the College to systematically record in the minutes of meetings the action taken from previous meetings. It is also **advisable** for the College to review the terms of reference of all committees to ensure that responsibilities and reporting lines are clear and consistent.

1.3 The College has, during the course of this academic year, developed procedures for annual monitoring and self-evaluation of its provision. This consists of an annual monitoring report compiled by the Director of Studies which sets out specific actions to be monitored in quarterly reviews. The College has yet to produce a report. Quality improvement is an agenda item on the Academic Committee. It is **advisable** for the College to implement the annual monitoring procedures and produce a report and action plan for the current academic year.

1.4 Communication between the subcentres and head office has been significantly strengthened in 2012-13. Standardisation meetings, which bring together the staff of all centres for training and discussion, have been held at head office. These have included exercises to monitor standards of marking. Prior to spring 2013, there had been management problems between head office and the subcentres in that some tutors had failed to correctly implement College policies and had not attended briefings, training tutorials and standardisation meetings. The College took corrective action to the management structure by bringing the academic staff of the subcentres under the employment, and therefore direct line management, of head office. It is **advisable** for the College to monitor the newly implemented management structure to ensure consistency across all centres.

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

1.5 The College is effective in applying policies and procedures that meet the expectations of the awarding organisation. For example, the College uses the assessment criteria of the awarding organisation which is monitored by an external examiner.

The awarding organisation provides programme specifications and intended learning outcomes which reflect subject benchmark statements. The College has responded to the recommendations of the external examiner, for example, through adopting a procedure of formative and summative assessment and through the creation of the role of internal verifier. Periodic reviews by the awarding organisation take place to ensure that standards in the College are met.

1.6 The College has recently undertaken a detailed mapping of its policies and procedures against the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code). While there has been considerable work undertaken on the mapping, the engagement with the Quality Code is still at an early stage. It is **desirable** for the College to communicate the expectations of the Quality Code to all staff and fully integrate them into its policies and procedures.

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

1.7 Internal verification processes are adequate. The guidelines for internal verification are included in the unit and course content provided by the awarding organisation. Internal verification occurs for all course units in accordance with the guidelines. External verification also takes place according to agreed procedures. The awarding organisation is responsible for the appointment of an external examiner. The College has received a positive report from the external examiner that appropriate standards have been met.

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

## **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's management of the quality of learning opportunities is adequate. The Director of Studies has overall responsibility for the management of learning opportunities and academic matters are considered by the Academic Committee. Awarding organisation reports are positive with regards to the quality of the academic delivery, assignment tasks and criteria, student involvement in class, and internal verification of setting and marking assignments. Students are encouraged to submit draft work for formative feedback which helps students prepare for their summative final assessment. This is **good practice**. Students confirm that they find this practice helpful.

2.2 The College has clear academic monitoring and review processes which include regular evaluations of tutor performance, student feedback and an annual monitoring report (see paragraph 1.3). These are linked with quality assurance policies and procedures and the lines of responsibility for implementing these across centres are clear.

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

2.3 The College is using external reference to the awarding organisation to manage learning opportunities but has yet to enhance them by means of implementing its recent mapping exercise against the Quality Code (see paragraph 1.6).

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

2.4 The College has a developing Teaching and Learning Strategy. This is supplemented by policies for internal and external assessments, student malpractice and student appeals. The College ensures that teaching and assessments match the learning outcomes for each course unit and level through internal verification and staff training. The process of implementation of policies and procedures across all centres takes place through the standardisation meetings. A recent meeting included training on lesson plans and internal verification. It is **desirable** for the College to further develop the Teaching and Learning Strategy.

2.5 The College has a clear process for teaching observation which consists of an assessor observation of each tutor once a term. Student feedback is also part of the overall tutor evaluation. The outcomes of both teacher observation and student evaluation are discussed by the Academic Committee. However, the connection between the outcomes of the evaluation and the subsequent action plan for staff development is not explicit. It is **desirable** for the College to formally record the action plan and decision-making on staff development.

2.6 The College has a range of methods to gather student views. Student representatives are appointed to liaise with management on all aspects of the College's provision but their appointment is both informal and inconsistent. Some subcentres have no student representation. There is no student representation on any committee. Student membership of Academic Committee has been suggested by an external examiner. The Director of Studies has recently compiled a comprehensive report on student attitudes, experience and expectations following a survey of current and former students. The College operates an open door policy to enable students to express their views to both academic and administrative staff. It is **desirable** for the College to formalise the student representation scheme across all centres.

2.7 Feedback to students is timely but variable. Feedback is provided in different ways, including written feedback on draft assignments and tutorials either on a need-for basis following analysis of student performance or by student request (see paragraph 2.9). However, written feedback on final assessments is variable. It is **advisable** for the College to provide written feedback to students on final assessments.

## **How does the College assure itself that students are supported effectively?**

2.8 The standard of academic support to students is variable. Students receive an appropriate induction which comprises a two-day event covering both practical arrangements (on health and safety, attendance, finances) and academic policies, including assessment and academic misconduct. At induction, students receive a copy of the Programme Handbook, a course leaflet, and timetables. Students confirm that induction has significantly improved this year.

2.9 Additional classes are offered on a need-for basis which is decided either following student request, or based on an analysis of student performance. Such additional classes may include study skills, numeracy or further tuition in their academic studies. Take-up is significant and students confirm that it is helpful. In addition, the College has recently appointed learning support assistants to deal with a range of matters, including student queries on assessment results, anti-plagiarism support, and other academic matters. One-to-one tutorials are provided when this is deemed necessary as decided by the Academic Coordinator, following an analysis of student performance. It is **desirable** for the College to timetable regular one-to-one tutorials to ensure that all students are supported effectively.

2.10 The College offers appropriate pastoral support. Student welfare officers respond to student enquiries and provide assistance on personal, financial and other matters. Students appreciate the quality and timeliness of this support.

### **How effectively does the College develop its staff in order to improve student learning opportunities?**

2.11 The College has clear policies and procedures for staff recruitment, appraisal and development. Regular training is provided, for example, on criteria-based assessments and matching assessments to learning outcomes. The awarding organisation reports confirm that members of staff have attended training.

2.12 The College uses a range of methods to identify staff development needs. New staff are asked at induction about their training or development needs which is subsequently followed up. The annual appraisal follows up the training needs of all staff. Internal training for academic staff is provided by the Principal, Director of Studies and the Lead Internal Verifier. All tutors are required to attend regular standardisation meetings. Academic Committee considers staff development needs based on an analysis of student performance, tutor evaluation, and the awarding organisation's requirements. However, the link between this analysis and decisions on staff development is not yet explicit (see paragraph 2.5).

2.13 The induction programme for new members of staff covers a wide range of activities, including the College facilities, administrative policies and processes and the specific duties of the post. At the end of the first month, there is a meeting with the Induction Coordinator to review progress and, after three months, a further review is held to determine if any additional support is required.

### **How effectively does the College ensure that learning resources are accessible to students and sufficient to enable them to achieve the intended learning outcomes?**

2.14 The external examiner and the students comment favourably on the learning resources. The virtual learning environment is a new resource and includes some study materials. Study materials are also supplied to students as hard copy or by web access through the awarding organisation's website. Students have access to a small library at the Romford site. Links to multimedia sites and information are included in the assignment brief which encourage students' broader reading and research. The awarding organisation's recommended reading and resource lists are made available to students. Appropriately qualified teaching staff cover the range of curriculum areas and support student learning.

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 effectively does the College communicate information about learning opportunities to students and other stakeholders?**

3.1 The procedures for managing the publication of information about learning opportunities are not effective. The College has a policy for published information but it is limited in scope and range. For example, it omits reference to the management of the virtual

learning environment. The Principal has overall responsibility for final sign-off on all aspects associated with published information but there is a lack of clarity on devolved responsibilities. The main method of communication with students, staff and other stakeholders is by electronic means. This includes the website, which is well laid out and reasonably easy to navigate with information for prospective students and the wider community. It includes downloadable information for current students, information on the College's subcentres and access to external information such as student finance.

3.2 Information available on the website is supplemented by printed materials and through the virtual learning environment. Students are satisfied with the accuracy, completeness and usefulness of information provided by the College and commented that it had improved significantly.

3.3 Elements of the published information were inaccurate. For example, information on the course structure differed between the website and the Programme Handbook. The latter included an erroneous programme structure and unclear progression information. There were also broken links on the website.

3.4 During the course of the review, the College made several significant updates to the Programme Handbook and to the website to fix errors pointed out by the team, including broken links to documents and the replacement of images to show actual pictures of the College.

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

3.5 Changes to the website are made annually with minor changes made as and when they are identified and/or required. However, there appears to be no defined schedule for the regular review of minor amendments to information. The team were informed that this was done at least once a term, although it would appear that such changes are reactive rather than as a result of monitoring.

3.6 Students indicated that they are satisfied with the information provided. Information for both prospective and current students is contained in the Programme Handbook. A hard copy is given to students during induction. Students are required to sign to show that they have received a copy. It is **advisable** for the College to clarify the procedures and responsibilities for the maintenance and monitoring of the accuracy of information about learning opportunities and implement them across all centres.

<p>The team concludes that reliance <b>can</b> be placed on the information that the provider produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.</p>
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## Action plan<sup>3</sup>

Essex International College Ltd action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight July 2013						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The review team identified the following areas of <b>good practice</b> that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the submission of draft work for formative assessment which helps students prepare for the final assessment (paragraph 2.1).</li> </ul>	A formal plan of formative submissions to be put in place	From September 2013	Director of Studies	Use of individual learning plans to identify formal submissions	Academic Committee/ Principal	1 Assignment Submission Report by centres/ campuses (cumulative totals)
	Training of teachers in guidance of formative assessment	From September 2013	Director of Studies/Lead Internal Verifier	Improved awareness of assessment function from staff and less assessment errors	Academic Committee/ Principal	2 Decrease in assignment referrals (and therefore increase in pass rate)
	Tutorials to be timetabled	From September 2013	Director of Studies/ individual academic staff/learner support assistants	Timetable in place for each student	Academic Committee/ Principal	3 Individual student progress reports

<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 organisation.

Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is <b>advisable</b> for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>systematically record in the minutes of committee meetings the action taken from previous meetings (paragraph 1.2)</li> </ul>	<p>Include in the meeting minutes the action taken from previous meetings</p> <p>Draft minutes to be sent to all attendees for confirmation before final minutes are drawn up for verification and checking of accuracy and signing</p>	<p>Immediately</p> <p>After each meeting</p>	<p>Administrator</p> <p>Administrator</p>	<p>Staff being made fully aware of the action taken from previous meetings</p> <p>Indicator would be action points set out in minutes</p> <p>Confirmation of minutes being sent to all committee members</p>	<p>Heads of department/ Senior Management Team</p> <p>Director of Studies (for delivery/reading and completed attendee signature list)</p>	<p>1 Minutes of committee meetings</p> <p>2 Signature list of attendees' confirmation of minutes' content</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>review the Terms of Reference of all committees to ensure that responsibilities and reporting lines are clear and consistent (paragraph 1.2)</li> </ul>	<p>Review terms of reference for each committee</p> <p>Develop a flow chart to illustrate clearly the responsibilities and reporting lines for each committee</p>	<p>October 2013 and then annually thereafter</p> <p>October 2013</p>	<p>Director of Studies</p> <p>Director of Studies</p>	<p>Staff and students are much more clear about the functions of committees</p> <p>Flow chart showing clear reporting lines is in place and understood by all staff/committee</p>	<p>Principal/Senior Management Team</p> <p>Principal/Senior Management Team</p>	<p>1 Terms of reference for each committee</p> <p>2 Flow chart of responsibilities and reporting lines</p>

				members		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>implement the annual monitoring procedures and produce a report and action plan for the current academic year (paragraph 1.3)</li> </ul>	Academic Committee, Attendance Committee, Welfare Committee, Appeals Committee to report their findings for the end of year	31 August 2013	Director of Studies	Action Plan for 2014 is available based on information (gained from the academic year 2012-13) from all committees and all campuses/centres, plus input from the Student Forums	Academic Committee	1 All Committee reports
	All centres to submit their end-of-year results, attendance, and feedback documentation	31 August 2013	Director of Studies		Academic Committee	2 End-of-year results, attendance, and feedback documentation
	General meeting of all heads of centres, senior staff and Academic/Attendance and Welfare Committees to be held	10 September 2013	Academic coordinators (to organise)		Academic Committee	3 General Meeting minutes
	Full meeting of the Senior Management Team to be held to review centre submissions and finalise a 'roll out' programme for 2013-14	11 September 2013	Director of Studies		Academic Committee	4 Meeting minutes and Action Plan for 2013-14
	Action Plan/Report for 2012-13 to be finalised	15 September 2013	Director of Studies		Academic Committee	5 Action Plan/ Report for 2012-13

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>monitor the newly implemented management structure to ensure consistency across all centres (paragraph 1.4)</li> </ul>	<p>Carry out staff appraisal meetings with academic coordinators across all centres/campuses</p> <p>Carry out management meetings with all academic coordinators from each site</p> <p>Review the staff appraisal reports of tutors at each site</p>	<p>September 2013 and then annually</p> <p>Each semester from September 2013</p> <p>September 2013 and then annually</p>	<p>Director of Studies</p> <p>Director of Studies/Senior Management Team</p> <p>Director of Studies</p>	<p>Areas of improvement are identified and acted upon</p> <p>Minutes of management meetings on file and input across/ from all centres</p> <p>Areas of improvement are identified and acted upon</p>	<p>Principal/Senior Management Team</p> <p>Principal</p> <p>Principal/Senior Management Team</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff appraisal reports (of academic coordinators)</li> <li>Meeting minutes</li> <li>Staff appraisal reports (tutors)</li> </ol>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide consistent written feedback to students on final assessments (paragraph 2.7)</li> </ul>	<p>Develop Feedback Policy for use in all centres</p> <p>Integrate the Feedback Policy into a full Assessment, Marking and Feedback Policy and deliver this through standardisation across all centres</p>	<p>September 2013</p> <p>November 2013</p>	<p>Director of Studies</p> <p>Director of Studies/Lead Internal Verifier</p>	<p>Better consistency found when reviewing written feedback of marked final assessments across all centres</p> <p>Assessors have a better understanding of the process and the standard required</p> <p>More consistency in assessment and</p>	<p>Academic Committee</p> <p>Academic Committee</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment, Marking and Feedback Policy</li> <li>Standardisation meeting minutes</li> <li>End-of-semester reports for all students</li> </ol>

	Implement procedure for semester reports displaying academic achievement/ progression for each student	November 2013	Academic coordinators	feedback across centres Able to identify which students are falling behind and who may require further support	Academic Committee	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>clarify the procedures and responsibilities for the maintenance and monitoring of the accuracy of information about learning opportunities and implement them across all centres (paragraph 3.6).</li> </ul>	Ensure all current programme documentation contains accurate information about the programme aims and learning outcomes	August 2013	Director of Studies	Up-to-date programme documentation	Academic Committee	1 Student handbook/ College website
	Ensure all students receive copies of updated information	September 2013	Academic coordinators	Induction forms and 'signed for' notifications	Academic Committee	2 Induction forms and notifications 3 Meeting minutes
	Systematically review all materials for public provision on a semester basis	From November 2013	Principal/ IT Manager	Effective processes are in place to periodically review all materials for public provision	Principal	4 Annual Monitoring/End-of-Year Report
	College annual monitoring procedures and end-of-year action planning process to ensure all documentation is updated accurately	From April 2014	Director of Studies	Up-to-date and accurate information about learning opportunities	Academic Committee	

Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is <b>desirable</b> for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>communicate the expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education to all staff and fully integrate them into College policies and procedures (paragraph 1.6)</li> </ul>	Review the existing guidance for the implementation of the Quality Code across all policies, procedures and practice	September 2013	Director of Studies	All policies inclusive of the Quality Code	Academic Committee	1 Results of the compliance exercise are provided in a new document – 'Matching the needs of the Quality Code'
	A College compliance exercise to be undertaken, this will establish areas where centres (through current policy/practices and procedures) are compliant and whether further development is required	October 2013	Director of Studies	Improved compliancy from centres	Academic Committee	2 Follow-up meeting minutes of action taken from compliance exercise
	Production of a Quality Assurance Handbook that sets in the College context, the Quality Assurance Framework for UK Higher Education, for dissemination across all centres/campuses	December 2013	Director of Studies	Improved quality and assurance across centres and increased application of the 'best identified practices'	Academic Committee	3 A 'Way Forward' Quality Assurance Handbook that is formed from the review of teaching and quality assurance, and matched to the Quality Assurance Framework for Higher

						Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>further develop the Teaching and Learning Strategy (paragraph 2.4)</li> </ul>	Develop a new comprehensive Teaching and Learning Strategy for use throughout the organisation	January 2014	Director of Studies	Teaching and Learning Strategy is approved and implemented	Academic Committee	1 Teaching and Learning Strategy/ Progress Reports
	Roll out new Teaching and Learning Strategy across all centres/ campuses	January 2014	Academic Coordinator	Implementation reports demonstrating improved teaching and learning strategy being executed	Academic Committee	2 Minutes of implementation meetings across all centres/ campuses
	Centres/campuses to integrate Teaching and Learning Strategy in (individual) centres/ campuses	June 2014	Academic Coordinator	Evidence of strategy implementation (individual learning plans, tutorials, increase in assignment submission, better pass rates)	Academic Committee	3 Implementation plans and meeting minutes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>formally record the action plan and decision making on staff development following tutor evaluation (paragraph 2.5)</li> </ul>	Develop and approve teaching and learning policy to include an updated teaching observation process to include formalised action planning	September 2013	Director of Studies	Improved practices identified during each staff appraisal	Academic Committee	1 Staff appraisal reports
	Implement and embed action planning into	September 2013	Director of Studies	Areas of weaknesses are	Academic Committee	2 Teaching observations and feedback 3 End-of-year course evaluation and

	<p>the tutor observation process</p> <p>Annually evaluate the effectiveness of teaching observation process and modify teaching and learning policy and procedures accordingly via an action plan that includes continuing professional development (where necessary)</p>	Ongoing from October 2013	Director of Studies	<p>improved and recorded through tutor observations</p> <p>Teaching and learning policies are revised by evaluating effectiveness and incorporating the 'best identified practices'</p>	Academic Committee	continuing professional development documentation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>formalise the student representation scheme across all centres (paragraph 2.6)</li> </ul>	Meet with all centre managers to discuss the College Student Welfare Model, and its operation	October 2013	Director of Studies	The student representation scheme is fully operational	Academic Committee	1 Minutes of meeting(s)
	Roll out the College Student Welfare Model across all centres	From September 2013	Director of Studies	Improved student services	Academic Committee	2 Student Welfare Model
	Organise student representatives to be engaged by all centres, and formalise their role	October 2013	Head of Student Welfare	There are student representatives across all centres	Academic Coordinator	3 Meetings including student representatives
	Take feedback from 'Free-4-All' sessions	November 2013	Head of Student Welfare	Students are receiving regular	Academic Coordinator	4 Feedback minutes of Free-4-All meetings
						5 Student feedback
						6 Feedback

	from each campus			feedback from all meetings		information and follow-up action taken
	Evaluate practice across each centre	December 2013	Director of Studies	Positive feedback from students across centres	Academic Committee	7 Meeting minutes
	Feed information back into the Academic Committee	January 2014	Director of Studies	Academic committee takes positive action	Academic Committee	8 Feedback notification/minutes
	Allow for student representation on Academic and Welfare Committees	From October 2013	Head of Student Welfare	Positive feedback from students	Director of Studies	
	Feedback to students from the Academic Committee via Student Representative	From December 2013	Head of Student Welfare	Positive feedback from students	Director of Studies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>timetable regular one-to-one tutorials to ensure that all students are supported effectively (paragraph 2.9).</li> </ul>	Adjust the schemes of work to include timetabled tutorial periods	August 2013	Director of Studies	Regular tutorials are taking place as per schemes of work and assessment policy	Academic Committee	1 Class timetables and schemes of work
	Ensure documentation specific to the tutorial is formalised and used	September 2013	Director of Studies	Individual learning plans are in place and being used effectively	Academic Committee	2 Tutorial materials and documentation
	Introduce the use of individual learning	September 2013	Director of Studies	Production and use of tutorial	Academic Committee	3 Individual learning plans

	plans to document tutorial (and other academic output) evidence			documentation and individual learning plans		
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## 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 for Educational Oversight can be found at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/educational-oversight](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/educational-oversight).

## Glossary

This glossary explains terms used in this report. You can find a fuller glossary at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary). Formal definitions of key terms can be found in the [Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook](#).<sup>4</sup>

**Academic Infrastructure** The core guidance developed and maintained by QAA in partnership with the UK higher education community and used by QAA and higher education providers until 2011-12 for quality assurance of UK higher education. It has since been replaced by the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (**Quality Code**).

**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 higher education providers for their courses and expected for their awards. See also **threshold academic standards**.

**awarding body** A UK higher education provider (typically a university) with the authority to award academic qualifications located on the **framework for higher education qualifications**, such as diplomas or degrees.

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

**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 which formed the core element of the **Academic Infrastructure** (now superseded by the **Quality Code**).

**designated body** An organisation that has been formally appointed or recognised to perform a particular function. QAA has been recognised by UKBA as a designated body for the purpose of providing educational oversight.

**differentiated judgements** In a Review for Educational Oversight, 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 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 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*.

**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

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<sup>4</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx)

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 study, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, resources, and specialist facilities (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.

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

**programme** 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** A UK degree-awarding body or any other organisation that offers courses of higher education 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').

**Quality Code** Short term for the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which is being developed from 2011 to replace the **Academic Infrastructure** and will incorporate all its key elements along with additional topics and overarching themes.

**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 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 qualifications frameworks 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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