

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

## Futureworks Training Ltd

January 2014

### Contents

<b>Key findings about Futureworks Training Ltd .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Good practice .....	1
Recommendations.....	1
<b>About this report.....</b>	<b>2</b>
The provider's stated responsibilities .....	3
Recent developments.....	3
Students' contribution to the review .....	3
<b>Detailed findings about Futureworks Training Ltd .....</b>	<b>4</b>
1 Academic standards.....	4
2 Quality of learning opportunities .....	6
3 Information about learning opportunities.....	8
<b>Action plan .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>About QAA .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Glossary .....</b>	<b>16</b>

## Key findings about Futureworks Training Ltd

As a result of its Review for Specific Course Designation carried out in January 2014, 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 programmes it offers on behalf of University of Central Lancashire.

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.

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 significant contribution of the Quality and Academic Review Committee to the development of the provider's academic processes and practices (paragraph 1.4)
- the innovative use of Module Quality Enhancement Plans (paragraph 2.5).

### 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:

- formally clarify the roles and responsibilities for academic standards in the management structures (paragraph 1.2)
- ensure that students and markers are clear about how learning outcomes can be achieved (paragraph 1.9)
- document fully, monitor and evaluate published information about learning opportunities (paragraph 3.8).

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

- implement a mechanism to evaluate the effectiveness of management structures (paragraph 1.10)
- include students on management committees in accordance with stated plans (paragraph 2.6).

## About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Specific Course Designation](#)<sup>1</sup> conducted by QAA at Futureworks Training Ltd (the provider), 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 the University of Central Lancashire (the University). The review was carried out by Dr Nicola Dickson, Mr Peter Hymans, Mr Peter Ptashko (reviewers) and Dr Margaret Johnson (coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the [Review for Educational Oversight \(and for specific course designation\): Handbook, April 2013](#).<sup>2</sup> Evidence in support of the review included a range of documentation from the provider and the awarding body, meetings with staff and students, and reports of reviews by the University. The review team also considered the provider's use of the relevant external reference points:

- *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ)
- subject benchmark statements
- the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code).

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

Futureworks Training Ltd is a small, privately owned organisation situated in the centre of Manchester. It was established in 2006 to provide education and training in sound, film and television, games and computer-generated imagery at undergraduate, diploma and professional development levels. The mission of the provider is 'to be recognised as the leading alternative higher education institution in the UK for media education' and to be the first choice for students who want top-quality, vocational and relevant education that leads to sustainable employment in the global media industry.

There are 285 full-time students enrolled on seven degree programmes and 43 staff, of whom 37 are involved in the provision and support of higher education. There are 23 part-time staff and six administrators.

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

### University of Central Lancashire

- BSc Hons Audio Engineering and Production
- BA Hons Digital Animation with Illustration
- BA Hons Game Art
- BA Hons Games Design
- BA Hons Music Production
- BA Hons Post Production for Film and TV
- BA Hons 3D Visual Effects

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<sup>1</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/designated-providers/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/designated-providers/Pages/default.aspx)

<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)

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

All programmes are awarded by the University under partnership arrangements. The provider's responsibilities include student admission and induction, course delivery, student support and feedback, annual monitoring, resource provision, and liaison with the awarding university. The provider is also responsible for advertising and recruitment, although all advertising materials must be approved by the University prior to publication.

## **Recent developments**

In September 2012 the provider relocated to new, larger premises to accommodate a growth in student numbers and an expansion of the provision. The modern facility is 60 per cent larger and has extensive resources and technical equipment to support the programmes. There are eight recording and post-production studios, nine post-production suites, 11 computer laboratories, a dedicated student services office, a learning resource centre, dedicated space for non-technical activities such as life drawing, and a spacious open-access computing facility.

Between April 2012 and February 2013 the provider participated in five successful validation events which resulted in approval to run a further five undergraduate programmes. To enhance academic oversight of its provision, the organisation created a Quality and Academic Review Committee in April 2013 with a remit to review and approve academic standards and quality practices. The committee assesses the effectiveness and appropriateness of policies and procedures and is currently undertaking a comprehensive observation of all teaching staff employed by the organisation.

## **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 small group of students drawn from a variety of the provider's degree programmes prepared a submission for the review in a video-documentary. The students were provided with access to technical and meeting facilities and met regularly to discuss the progress of the submission. The Administration Manager and Facility Manager supported and guided the students with data and statistical analysis, and several members of the student body participated in video interviews. Four students met with the coordinator at the preparatory meeting and the team were able to meet with a group of 13 students during the visit. They were enthusiastic and engaged well in the discussions, and the team found their comments helpful.

## Detailed findings about Futureworks Training Ltd

### 1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The provider is effective in fulfilling its responsibilities for the management of its academic standards as defined within the awarding body Institutional Agreement, Memorandum of Cooperation and the Collaborative Provision Handbook. It is responsible for programme delivery, resources, student support and feedback, recruitment and annual monitoring. The awarding body retains overall responsibility for the maintenance, monitoring and evaluation of academic standards on all programmes. Approval arrangements include programmes that are also delivered by the awarding body and that existed prior to delivery by the provider, and programmes for which the provider has joint responsibility for writing.

1.2 The provider is committed to the development of higher education and takes pride in its provision. It has an effective management structure and all staff are clear about their responsibilities in relation to academic standards, although it is not explicit in the roles and job descriptions included in the Quality Handbook. In practice, responsibility for academic standards lies with the Managing Director who is effective in delegating duties to other members of staff and groups within the organisation, including the Quality Team, heads of department and programme leaders. It is **advisable** that the provider formally clarify the roles and responsibilities for academic standards in the management structures.

1.3 The provider's committee structure is defined in the Quality Handbook with suitable lines of communication. The Management Committee, which provides an effective forum for the dissemination of information into and from the provider's other committees, should be included in this structure. Key reports such as student retention are considered by the Management Committee which subsequently informs heads of department of issues and good practice.

1.4 The committee identified by the provider for the continuing oversight of academic standards is the Programme Leaders Committee, but minutes do not overtly reflect matters relating to academic standards. However, the General Manager recently introduced a Quality and Academic Review Committee that has a themed programme of specific issues to address during the current academic year. The committee is chaired by a senior member of staff who has remitted teaching time to address issues and form sub-groups of relevant staff to ensure that issues are considered within the context of maintaining and enhancing academic standards. The Quality and Academic Review Committee makes a significant contribution to the development of the provider's academic processes and practices and is **good practice**.

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

1.5 The use of external references in programme design and delivery is well developed. The provider considers the FHEQ, although this is the primary responsibility of the awarding body. Programme specifications make reference to subject benchmark statements and learning outcomes align with the FHEQ but are not directly referenced in the programme specifications. Staff are aware of the importance of the Quality Code for the assurance of academic standards and quality and have made reference to appropriate sections such as *Chapter A2: The subject and qualification level. Chapter B2: Recruitment, selection and admission to higher education* was used to inform the production of the new admissions

guide and *Chapter B6: Assessment of students and the recognition of prior learning* has recently been an agenda item for consideration by the Quality and Academic Review Committee.

1.6 The inclusion of professional and vendor qualifications within programme design on some courses ensures that content is relevant and current. One module of the BSc Audio Engineering and Production that uses an external vendor qualification as a learning outcome was subject to discussion with the external examiner, who suggested scaling the marks to fit awarding body norms. The outcome of the discussion was that subsequent results from the module will be analysed to see if this is required.

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

1.7 The awarding body maintains oversight of the provider's assessment and moderation process in accordance with its agreements. It is satisfied that the provider has a clear and robust assessment strategy in place to support students across the provision, with effective systems in place for the verification, marking and moderation of student work. The provider has assessment and moderation procedures within its own Quality Handbook but these are overridden by the awarding body procedure.

1.8 The awarding body retains responsibility for the oversight of external examiners' reports, but the provider responds appropriately to them through the awarding body and effectively engages in academic discourse with the examiners.

1.9 Marking criteria contained within the programme specifications and in use during the assessment process are underdeveloped. Most are not directly linked to the learning outcomes and some are generic to the type of assessment, for example essays. As a result of the lack of clarity in the criteria, feedback to students is also generic and limits the usefulness of the comments for their academic development. It is **advisable** that students and markers are clear about how learning outcomes can be achieved.

1.10 The provider has no procedure for the evaluation of its own management structures or processes in relation to academic standards or moderation. This year the provider is implementing an annual institution review process but it is not clear whether it will include moderation and examining. It would be **desirable** that a mechanism to evaluate the effectiveness of management structures is implemented.

1.11 The provider has limited formal opportunity for sharing good practice, but feedback on the work of the Quality and Academic Review Committee is given at the Annual General Meeting which all staff attend. During the 2013-14 academic year one senior member of staff is undertaking all the lesson observations and is able to transfer good practice between teaching staff. Sharing teaching and assessment practices is also facilitated through the close working relationship of the staff.

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 body.

## 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 provider fulfils its responsibilities under a partnership agreement with the awarding body, and has shared and defined responsibilities for the management and enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities as described in paragraphs 1.1 to 1.4.

2.2 There is an appropriate committee structure for the management and enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities that is becoming more formalised as student numbers increase. In spring 2013 an external academic consultant was used to carry out an internal audit that prompted a number of enhancements to processes, particularly in relation to monitoring. The provider recognises that the newly formed Quality and Academic Review Committee has yet to fulfil all its intended objectives, but the work completed to date has made a valuable contribution to the development of processes and practices. Day-to-day management of quality is carried out by the General Manager who is supported by a senior management team, and this is working effectively.

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

2.3 The provider is effective in its use of external reference points, as described in paragraphs 1.5 and 1.6.

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

2.4 The provider makes effective use of its Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy that is embedded within the Quality Manual and overseen and managed by the Quality Team. Student engagement with quality management systems is good, and a range of processes allow students to provide feedback on their experience. The supportive learning environment provided by the provider is fully appreciated by the students and its small size aids informal and swift resolution of issues raised by students. During the meeting with students, staff were described as enthusiastic, knowledgeable, helpful and friendly.

2.5 There is a three-tiered reporting structure to maintain and enhance the quality of teaching and learning that engages at module, programme and strategic levels. This ensures all relevant data and feedback are considered and dealt with at an appropriate stage, but has resulted in the production of a considerable number of action plans. These could be reduced by combining reports. At programme level, tutors review each module annually and are able to identify areas for improvement that are formally recorded in an innovative Module Quality Enhancement Plan and subsequently reported in the Annual Review report. The innovative use of Module Quality Enhancement Plans that enable tutors to have an active role in enhancing the quality of modules is **good practice**.

2.6 There is a Staff-Student Liaison Committee for each programme, and there are plans to engage student representatives on the Programme Leaders Committee and the Quality and Academic Review Committee. However, students are currently unaware of the existence of the latter committee and its remit. It would be **desirable** to include students on management committees in accordance with stated plans.

2.7 Students appreciate the recent initiative by tutors to introduce a more collaborative approach to content delivery between modules, which allows them to work with peers across programmes. This has allowed for a more realistic experience, and is valued by students.

Tutors also support students in a range of career-preparation activities such as applying for freelance work and student-led networking events with industry specialists. Peer assessment has been used developmentally, and students consider that they benefit from peer feedback in preparation for their future careers.

2.8 There are effective staff recruitment policies and processes. In particular, the practice of allocating a mentor to new staff for a substantial period of up to 18 months is commendable. The teaching staff have an impressive range of skills, knowledge and industry experience, which is valued by students.

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

2.9 There are robust mechanisms in place to support students. All students are allocated a personal tutor and formal meetings are held with them once a semester. Students confirm that staff are available consistently to resolve issues that may arise between formal tutorial sessions, and they feel supported by the open and approachable culture within the institution. The recently introduced virtual learning environment contains useful information and direction for students requiring specific support, including relevant information for disabled students. For example, a freelance member of staff has identified and implemented successful procedures for testing and support for a dyslexic student.

2.10 Key performance indicators and retention data are considered effectively to ensure students are monitored and supported. Statistics are used within annual course reports which feed into management committee meetings and are additionally monitored by the awarding body.

### **How effectively does the provider develop its staff to improve student learning opportunities?**

2.11 There is an effective staff training and development policy which contains a formal mechanism to identify additional support for inexperienced staff. Staff attend events and training held by the awarding body which supports tutors who have limited higher education experience.

2.12 There is a formal process for the observation of teaching staff. Staff confirmed that they find the process helpful and developmental and that good practice from the observations is shared at the Quality and Academic Review Committee.

2.13 The recent thematic work by the Quality and Academic Review Committee has provided a developmental opportunity for staff to engage with the Quality Code to ensure widespread understanding of the framework. Staff confirmed that they found the sessions valuable.

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

2.14 There is a clearly defined and robust process for the identification and maintenance of resources at the required industry standard, and the physical resources are valued by students. However, students have identified some issues, including the speed of internet access in the building, and equipment restrictions for some programmes. There are opportunities for these issues to be considered by the provider in Staff-Student Liaison Committees, and the provider has responded in some cases. In particular, the internet speed has been significantly improved over the last three years and various technical issues with student computers have been resolved.



2.15 The provider has a new learning resource centre containing a small number of key texts, although financial constraints do not allow students to have borrowing rights. This is being kept under review by the Quality Team. Students have access to online and physical library materials at the partner university, although many had not made use of them, citing distance as an issue.

2.16 The virtual learning environment has recently been introduced and is in an early stage of development. Students and staff reported that they were making use of it and that it was enhancing delivery and enabling students to achieve intended learning outcomes.

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 provider communicate information about learning opportunities to students and other stakeholders?

3.1 Programme and module handbooks, the Student Charter, and the prospectus contain clear and reliable information about learning opportunities. The provider's strategic plan sets out its long-term vision and effectively communicates the overall mission of the organisation to current and future students. It also successfully describes the industry-standard, student-led community that it is seeking to embed and extend.

3.2 The process for both application and selection to enrol with the provider is clear and helpful. Students are provided with entry criteria, key programme content and assessment details through a mixture of online information and meetings with staff. Guidance for prospective students is provided in the electronic Admissions Guide and the prospectus.

3.3 The quality and usefulness of open days is appreciated by students who value the face-to-face, informal approach of staff. The open days are continually enhanced through feedback by both students and staff. One of the activities provided as part of the Open Day is a tour of the facilities hosted by current students that has been highlighted as informative and is welcomed by prospective students.

3.4 Current students receive timely and accurate information on their course of study. Much of this is provided in one-to-one meetings with staff as well as online, and there is a standard template for module handbooks that is thorough, detailed and specifically tailored to individual courses.

3.5 The provider's virtual learning environment is an informative, accurate and central point of contact for key programme information. It enables students to engage further in their studies. There were some initial concerns over speed of access, and the resource continues to be further developed. Programme materials, internal evaluation reports, intra-college communication and external examiner reports are all provided for students on the electronic platform.

3.6 A broad range of social media tools are in successful operation and form an effective part of the learning environment. They are used both for promotional purposes and as an integral part of programme delivery, such as the use of a social media platform that provides a gallery of images for games design.

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

3.7 The provider has a number of systems for checking the accuracy, consistency and trustworthiness of the information it publishes. The process for ensuring the accuracy of the information published on the website is robust. The provider produces marketing and promotional campaigns designed and delivered to raise the profile of higher education in the region and to increase and widen participation across its student body. The provider submits all publicity materials for approval by the awarding body prior to publication, as outlined in the Institutional Agreement and Memorandum of Cooperation. Publicity materials are also reviewed by the awarding body as part of the annual monitoring process.

3.8 There is no overarching procedure to formally document or evaluate the review and quality assurance of internal materials that are made available to prospective and current students, such as course materials and the virtual learning environment. The General Manager is the single point of contact for much of this information, but there is no approved process in place that consistently and formally monitors all promotional materials in electronic and hard-copy formats. It is **advisable** to document fully, monitor and evaluate published information about learning opportunities.

3.9 Students are able to feed back on the quality of programme information provided on the website and the virtual learning environment through module and end-of-year surveys, and in the Staff-Student Liaison Committees and the Quality and Academic Review Committee. All feedback is considered and shared. Improvements are made and then reflected in actions taken to improve the quality of public information. This is disseminated directly through staff, the virtual learning environment and Staff-Student Liaison Committees. The students consider that the website is now more representative following the inclusion of examples of student work.

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>

Futureworks Training Ltd action plan relating to the Review of Specific Course Designation January 2014						
Good practice	Intended outcomes	Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes	Target date(s)	Action by	Reported to	Evaluation (process or evidence)
The review team identified the following areas of <b>good practice</b> that are worthy of wider dissemination within the provider:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the significant contribution of the Quality and Academic Review Committee to the development of the provider's academic processes and practices (paragraph 1.4)</li> </ul>	Review the performance of the Quality and Academic Review Committee over academic year 2013-14	Quality Team to meet with Quality and Academic Review Committee. Chair to review committee performance	Academic year 2014	Quality Team	Annual General Meeting	Report following review/Annual General Meeting report
	A schedule is created for Quality and Academic Review Committee activity for academic year 2014-15	Quality and Academic Review Committee to meet with Quality Team to discuss possible agenda for academic year 2014-15	September 2014	Quality Team	Managing Director	Published schedule of events for academic year 2014-15
	Make Quality and Academic Review Committee's activities available to students	Quality and Academic Review Committee Reporting Officer to upload committee terms of reference and reports to	March 2014	Quality and Academic Review Committee Reporting	General Manager	Virtual learning environment

<sup>3</sup> 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.

		the virtual learning environment		Officer		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the innovative use of Module Enhancement Quality Plans (paragraph 2.5)</li> </ul>	<p>Continued use of Module Enhancement Quality Plans in the module review process</p> <p>To make clearer to students what changes to modules have been made following the previous module review</p>	<p>Quality Team to review module boxes at end of academic year and get feedback from Programme Leaders and Module Tutors</p> <p>Administration Manager to propose that module handbook templates include a 'changes to this module' section at a Quality and Academic Review Committee meeting</p>	<p>August 2014</p> <p>April 2014</p>	<p>Quality Team</p> <p>Administration Manager</p>	<p>Management Committee Meeting and Programme Leaders Committee</p> <p>Quality and Academic Review Committee</p>	<p>Minutes of meetings</p> <p>Minutes of meetings and module handbook template</p>
<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 provider to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>formally clarify the roles and responsibilities for academic standards in the management structures (paragraph 1.2)</li> </ul>	<p>Role descriptors within the Quality Handbook to identify responsibilities for the management of academic standards</p> <p>Role descriptors are reviewed annually to reflect changing internal</p>	<p>Quality Team to review role descriptors and amend as necessary</p> <p>Quality Team to review role descriptors annually</p>	<p>March 2014</p> <p>August 2014</p>	<p>Quality Team</p> <p>Quality Team</p>	<p>General Manager</p> <p>Managing Director</p>	<p>Quality Handbook</p> <p>Signed Policy and Process Renewal Form</p>

	and external environments					
	Staff understand their responsibilities as stated in the updated role descriptors	Staff development session with staff involved in management of academic standards	April 2014	Quality Team	Managing Director	Report of staff development session produced by Academic Consultant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that students and markers are clear about how learning outcomes can be achieved (paragraph 1.9)</li> </ul>	Marking criteria relate more closely to the learning outcomes for the module	Quality and Academic Review Committee to perform a review of marking criteria used for assessments and work with tutors to enhance the standards of marking criteria	July 2014	Quality Team	Quality Team	Quality and Academic Review Committee, Report and Module Handbooks
	Markers are clear about how learning outcomes can be achieved	Staff development session for all markers	August 2014	Quality and Academic Review Committee	Quality Team	Attendance register of event
	Students are clear about how learning outcomes can be achieved	Student module inductions to include session on learning outcomes	Sept 2014	Module tutors	Programme Leaders	Completed module induction checklist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>document fully, monitor and evaluate published information about learning opportunities</li> </ul>	Formally document the approval of published materials	Devise and implement an approval system	June 2014	Quality Team	General Manager	Quality Handbook and completed approval forms
	Monitor the quality and accuracy of published	Devise and implement monitoring system	June 2014	Quality Team	Management Committee	Minutes of meeting and

(paragraph 3.8)	materials  Evaluate the effectiveness of the monitoring of the quality and accuracy of published materials	Annual review of monitoring process	July 2015	Quality Team	meeting  Managing Director	completed monitoring forms  Report of annual review
<b>Desirable</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>desirable</b> for the provider to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>implement a mechanism to evaluate the effectiveness of management structures (paragraph 1.10)</li> </ul>	<p>Creation of a governing body for Futureworks Training Ltd</p> <p>Management structures are reviewed to ensure their continued effectiveness</p>	<p>Establish a Board of Governors comprising shareholders, General Manager and Academic Consultant</p> <p>Board of Governors to review management structures and feed back to Quality Team</p>	<p>January 2015</p> <p>June 2015</p>	<p>Managing Director</p> <p>Board of Governors</p>	<p>Quality Team</p> <p>Quality Team</p>	<p>Terms of Reference in Quality Handbook</p> <p>Report of Board Meeting</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>include students on management committees in accordance with stated plans (paragraph 2.6)</li> </ul>	<p>Quality Team evaluate performance of Programme Leaders Committee to assess its effectiveness</p> <p>Development of a more effective method of including students in decision making at</p>	<p>Quality Team to review report of February Programme Leaders Committee meeting</p> <p>Establish an 'Education Board' to replace the Programme Leaders Committee</p>	<p>February 2014</p> <p>February 2014</p>	<p>Quality Team</p> <p>General Manager</p>	<p>Management Committee</p> <p>Managing Director</p>	<p>Minutes of meeting</p> <p>Terms of reference and committee structure diagram</p>

	organisation level					
	Student participation in organisation-level committee events	The membership of the Education Board will include student representatives	March 2014	Quality Team	Management Committee and Board of Governors	Meeting minutes

## 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 Specific Course Designation can be found at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/designated-providers/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/designated-providers/Pages/default.aspx).



## 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 \(and for specific course designation\): Handbook, April 2013](#).<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/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx)

**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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