



Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) of Global Banking School Ltd

November 2016

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About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at [Global Banking School Ltd](#). The review took place from 21 to 24 November 2016 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Dr Elaine Crosthwaite
- Mrs Jill Lyttle
- Mr Harry Williams (student reviewer).

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provided by Global Banking School Ltd and to make judgements as to whether or not its academic standards and quality meet UK expectations. These expectations are the statements in the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) (the Quality Code)¹ setting out what all UK [higher education providers](#) expect of themselves and of each other, and what the general public can therefore expect of them.

In Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) the QAA review team:

- makes judgements on
 - the setting and maintenance of academic standards
 - the quality of student learning opportunities
 - the information provided about higher education provision
 - the enhancement of student learning opportunities
- makes recommendations
- identifies features of good practice
- affirms action that the provider is taking or plans to take.

A check is also made on the provider's financial sustainability, management and governance (FSMG) with the aim of giving students reasonable confidence that they should not be at risk of being unable to complete their course as a result of financial failure.

A summary of the findings can be found in the section starting on page 2. [Explanations of the findings](#) are given in numbered paragraphs in the section starting on page 5.

During the review the team investigated a Concern raised through QAA's Concerns Scheme. As a result of investigations during the review the Concern was not upheld. Further details can be found under Expectations B3, B4 and B8 and in the summary section of the quality of student learning opportunities on pages 42 and 43.

The QAA website gives more information [about QAA](#) and its mission.² A dedicated section explains the method for [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\)](#).³ For an explanation of terms see the [glossary](#) at the end of this report.

¹ The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at: www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code.

² QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us.

³ Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers): www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/Educational-Oversight.aspx.

Key findings

QAA's judgements about Global Banking School Ltd

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at Global Banking School Ltd.

- The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies and other awarding organisations **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of the information about learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The enhancement of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following feature of **good practice** at Global Banking School Ltd:

- the strategic focus on employability and extensive careers support for students which enables them to develop their academic, personal and professional potential (Expectations B4 and Enhancement).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations** to Global Banking School Ltd.

By June 2017:

- strengthen the mechanisms available to ensure the effective oversight of recruitment and admissions (Expectation B2)
- strengthen the mechanisms for reviewing student engagement initiatives (Expectation B5)
- implement a systematic approach to the review and updating of key quality documentation to ensure that the information available is fit for purpose (Expectations C, A2.1, B1, B6 and B10).

By July 2017:

- develop the arrangements for the identification and sharing of good practice across all teaching staff (Expectations B3, B4 and Enhancement)
- fully articulate the School's approach to the enhancement of student learning opportunities (Enhancement).

By September 2017:

- ensure that the operation of committees reflects their terms of reference and that meeting records aid effective institutional oversight and monitoring of the provision (Expectations B8, B7 and Enhancement)
- develop and implement a standardised and systematic approach that includes staff members teaching on each programme in the monitoring and review of those programmes (Expectations B8, A3.3 and B3).

Financial sustainability, management and governance

The financial sustainability, management and governance check has been satisfactorily completed.

About Global Banking School Ltd

Global Banking School Ltd (the School) has grown since its original inception as the Green Business College in 2010. Its mission is 'to facilitate applied global investment banking knowledge with quality, depth and global research'.

The School has been offering Chartered Financial Analyst Institute programmes and programmes of the Institute of Administrative Management since 2012. Additional programmes have been added including an ATHE Diploma in Strategic Management in 2014 and Pearson Higher National Certificate/Diploma programmes from 2015.

The School is currently in a transitional period as it is starting to offer programmes with Buckinghamshire New University (BNU) and the University of Bedfordshire in addition to having an ongoing arrangement to act as a tuition centre for the University of London BSc Banking and Finance programme. The arrangement with the University of London involves distance learning provision for international students under academic direction from London School of Economics and Political Science. At the time of the review visit, the School had 61 full time students on a range of programmes (with two part students completing a Chartered Financial Analyst programme). The School employs a core team of full-time staff as well as relying on sessional staff to deliver specific modules. At the time of the visit, there were five full-time lecturers (three of these staff members also took the role of programme leader), 10 full-time administrative/marketing/support staff and 19 part time/sessional lecturing staff (with an additional staff member for the CFA provision).

Therefore, since the last review and annual monitoring visit, the major change has been the School's move from diploma qualifications to degree qualifications in partnership with university degree awarding bodies.

In addition to responding to changes in the higher education sector, an immediate challenge for the School involves the continued development of key policies and procedures in line with the requirements of the new awarding bodies.

The first cohorts started on the BNU programmes in September 2016. At the time of the review visit, the School had 23 full-time students on the franchised BA Business and Finance and 21 students on the BA Business and Finance top-up programme. The School also had six students on the MSc Global Investment and Finance programme validated by BNU. Three students were completing the HND level 5 Diploma in Business, one student was completing the ATHE level 6 Diploma in Management and seven were finishing the ATHE level 7 Diploma in Strategic Management. There are planned intakes in January 2017 for the franchised MBA General and MBA Global Banking with the University of Bedfordshire. No students are currently accessing the arrangement with the University of London.

The School had a Review for Educational Oversight in 2012 which identified two features of good practice, two advisable and five desirable recommendations. Subsequent annual monitoring visits in 2013, 2014 and 2015 have confirmed that the previous recommendations have been addressed.

Explanation of the findings about Global Banking School Ltd

This section explains the review findings in more detail.

Terms that may be unfamiliar to some readers have been included in a [brief glossary](#) at the end of this report. A fuller [glossary of terms](#) is available on the QAA website, and formal definitions of certain terms may be found in the operational description and handbook for the [review method](#), also on the QAA website.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Findings

1.1 As the School is not a degree-awarding body and provides teaching only for external awards, responsibilities with respect to *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) lie with the awarding bodies and organisations.

1.2 To date, programmes offered by the School have been awarded by Pearson, the Awards for Training and Higher Education (ATHE), and the Chartered Financial Analyst Institute (CFA). Specifications provided by these awarding organisations note that their courses are aligned to the FHEQ and are suitably benchmarked against both the Quality Code and standards recognised by professional bodies as appropriate.

1.3 From 2016-17, the School has entered into new agreements with two universities and is offering a franchised degree (BA (Hons) Business and Finance) and a validated degree (MSc in Global Investment and Finance) with Buckinghamshire New University. At the time of the review, arrangements to offer two franchised degrees (MBA General and MBA Global Banking) with the University of Bedfordshire were well advanced, and are

scheduled to start in early 2017. Documentation provided makes clear the responsibilities of both parties to these agreements.

1.4 The arrangements at the School, in association with its awarding bodies and organisations would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.5 In testing this Expectation, the review team examined a range of documents including agreements with awarding bodies, external verification reports, the School's Quality Assurance Manual, programme specifications and student handbooks. Discussions took place in meetings with senior staff and a representative from one of the School's university partners.

1.6 The School has had little or no direct input to programmes to date. However, the initial design for the MSc in Global Investment and Finance was derived within the School, based on both industry and academic reference points, before discussions took place with BNU. Senior staff told the team that they found this process helpful in the further development of their understanding of the FHEQ.

1.7 Programme specifications and student handbooks contain the necessary information for standards to be maintained, including programme level learning outcomes. Teaching staff are made aware of the requirements of the awarding bodies and organisations and the required standards through induction workshops, standardisation meetings and internal communications.

1.8 Documentation about programmes offered by the School makes clear that awards are positioned appropriately within the FHEQ and that relevant benchmarking has taken place. The levels and learning outcomes of each award are in accordance with awarding body or organisation requirements. The team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.9 As a non degree-awarding provider, the School's internal academic governance arrangements aim to ensure that the requirements of each awarding body or organisation are met; annual reviews are undertaken by these bodies and recommendations arising are housed within the School's action plan. Action points arising from internal sources are also included in this action plan. The School has developed internal procedures to standardise assessment outcomes to ensure it conforms to the expectations of its awarding bodies and organisations.

1.10 The Academic Board is the senior academic committee responsible for strategy and has received external verifier reports to date; it reports to, and is chaired by, the Chief Executive. The School is introducing a new Learning and Teaching Committee with an operational monitoring role as a sub-group of the Academic Board.

1.11 Headings in the School's Quality Assurance Manual reflect the Quality Code; it is explicit on relevant reference points. Detailed internal procedures and templates are included. It is usually revised and developed annually. School policies are usually updated annually, included in the Quality Assurance Manual, and available on the student virtual learning environment (VLE).

1.12 The academic governance structures and procedures that the School has put in place would enable this Expectation to be met.

1.13 The team tested this Expectation by reviewing quality assurance documentation, minutes of all committees, programme specifications and student handbooks. Discussions were held with staff involved in quality assurance processes and with student representatives.

1.14 The restructuring of committees should enable the Academic Board to concentrate more on strategic issues. The new Learning and Teaching Committee designed to concentrate on operational matters has not yet met.

1.15 Assessment processes used to demonstrate the achievement of intended learning outcomes are set out in the programme specifications and student handbooks relevant to each awarding body or organisation.

1.16 The Quality Assurance Manual makes frequent and appropriate reference to the Quality Code and provides fairly comprehensive coverage of School quality assurance structures, policies and procedures though it is not always clear from the contents pages which parts apply to staff and which to students. However, the 2016 version available at the time of the review visit did not include information on placement activities, which is relevant to its new degree provision and this contributed to the recommendation in Expectation C, paragraph 3.5, relating to the need for a systematic approach to the review and updating of key quality documentation.

1.17 The Quality Assurance Manual is comprehensive. Although processes are in place to ensure that it is updated from time to time, these processes are not yet sufficiently systematic. The School is, however, already aware that further updating is required during the current academic year. Overall, the School has appropriate arrangements, in association with its awarding partners, for the award of academic credit and qualifications. The review team therefore concludes that Expectation A2.1 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met

Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A2.2): Degree-awarding bodies maintain a definitive record of each programme and qualification that they approve (and of subsequent changes to it) which constitutes the reference point for delivery and assessment of the programme, its monitoring and review, and for the provision of records of study to students and alumni.

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

Findings

1.18 The School shares the responsibility for the production, development, and maintenance of definitive programme records in the form of programme specifications with most of its awarding bodies and organisations. These responsibilities are detailed in the formal documentation existing between the School and its awarding partners.

1.19 The processes in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.20 The review team tested this Expectation through meetings with senior staff, teaching staff, students, and a representative from one of the School's awarding bodies. The team also examined documentation relating to programme administration, structure, and student support.

1.21 Programme specifications are produced by the School in collaboration with their awarding partners and articulate the programme aims and learning outcomes, respective modes of delivery, and contain information relating to assessment. They also include an outline of the available modules that students can undertake to obtain the programme award. Complementing the overarching programme specifications, the School and its awarding partners have produced module specifications that include information relating to learning outcomes, teaching methods, and assessment for individual modules.

1.22 CFA and ATHE produce programme specifications for their courses and require providers to use them rather than produce their own. However, while Pearson produce a nationally-devised programme specification, it remains the responsibility of the School to produce and maintain their own tailored version which the School has successfully done. However, the review team found that alterations to the School's Pearson programmes with respect to whether a work-placement module was included as part of their higher national courses had not been reflected within the programme specifications.

1.23 It is the responsibility of the School executive and programme management to produce the content for individual programme specifications. Specification content is approved by the School's Academic Board, the minutes of which reflect some, albeit brief, discussion of draft programme specification scrutiny. In the case of the School's university validated and franchised provision, scrutiny of programme specifications forms part of the revalidation and due diligence process conducted by the School's degree-awarding bodies.

1.24 During the review visit, the review team heard that students used programme specifications as signposting documents and staff referred to their use in the delivery of modules and programmes.

1.25 Notwithstanding the minor errors found in the higher national programme specifications, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met with an associated low risk because the error amounted to a minor oversight.

Expectation: Met

Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.1): Degree-awarding bodies establish and consistently implement processes for the approval of taught programmes and research degrees that ensure that academic standards are set at a level which meets the UK threshold standard for the qualification and are in accordance with their own academic frameworks and regulations.

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

Findings

1.26 The School largely delivers programmes that have been designed and approved by its awarding bodies and organisations, which hold responsibility for ensuring that national academic standards are met. The exception is the MSc Global Investment and Finance which the School developed in conjunction with the validating university. The awarding bodies have procedures to monitor and review alignment with their standards.

1.27 The processes for programme design and ensuring that academic standards are appropriately set in relation to UK threshold standards rest with the School's original awarding organisations, CFA, ATHE and Pearson and there are no plans for further development of the provision.

1.28 For the more recent franchised programmes, the university partners are responsible for programme design and approval, while responsibilities for development of the MSc Global Investment and Finance are shared, but in all cases, the universities are responsible for the academic standards of awards.

1.29 The School has set down a programme development and approval procedure which integrates with the design and approval processes of its university partners. This procedure is being implemented for new programme development in conjunction with BNU.

1.30 The processes for programme approval implemented by the School in conjunction with its awarding bodies give appropriate consideration to academic standards and would enable the Expectation to be met.

1.31 The review team tested the Expectation by checking the effectiveness of the School's processes for approval through consideration of validation documentation, programme specifications, and minutes of meetings. The team scrutinised external examiner reports to confirm that appropriate academic standards are maintained. The team also met senior, teaching and support staff, and an awarding body representative.

1.32 The School's arrangements for the development of new provision are working effectively. In relation to both awarding bodies, the School's programme proposals were subject to the universities' approval processes, with discussion by the respective partners and documentation submitted to an approval panel. The programme specifications indicate the relevant academic level, the intended learning outcomes and the assessment methods. The approval process included confirmation that academic standards are set at an appropriate level, and that the programmes align with the universities' academic and regulatory framework.

1.33 The MSc Global Investment and Finance programme, which was initially designed by the School, and put forward for validation by BNU, was subject to more detailed consideration than the franchised programmes, including external academic and professional scrutiny. BNU suggested improvements, and pre-validation changes relating to learning outcomes and assessment were made.

1.34 The School has established a programme development and approval procedure which is now being used for new programme development. This entails a three-stage process of initial consideration of a proposal by senior management, approval to proceed to development, and approval to deliver, at each stage subject to approval by the School's Academic Board and the academic partner. This approval procedure is appropriate for an institution of the size of the School and identifies the key considerations at each stage. The procedure is being implemented for the development of a BA (Hons) Business Management with Foundation degree which is at an early stage of approval.

1.35 The review team concludes that the School implements processes for design and approval of taught programmes which comply with the academic and regulatory framework of its awarding bodies and organisations and thereby ensures that academic standards are set at an appropriate level. Therefore the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

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

Findings

1.36 The awarding bodies and organisations set the academic standards for the qualifications, and where aspects of assessment are delegated to the School, they appoint external examiners or verifiers to check the achievement of learning outcomes and alignment with national standards. The universities' approvals process ensures that programmes, modules and qualifications meet both UK and their own threshold standards.

1.37 The implementation of the awarding bodies' and organisations' regulations and the use made of external expertise in setting and maintaining standards would enable the Expectation to be met.

1.38 In testing this Expectation, the review team considered awarding body assessment regulations and approval documentation, policies and meeting minutes, course handbooks, programme specifications and assessment packs along with external examiner and internal verification forms. The team met staff responsible for assessment and moderation.

1.39 The School has to date operated within the academic frameworks of three awarding organisations, Pearson, ATHE and CFA. Pearson provides the unit specifications which state the learning outcomes to be assessed. The School designs assignments to assess unit learning outcomes in compliance with Pearson requirements, followed by first marking and internal verification. Oversight is provided by the annual visit of the Pearson appointed external examiner. The ATHE process is similar, with the School setting and first marking assessments, and undertaking standardisation events, followed by external verification by the ATHE appointed external verifier. In the case of the CFA qualification, assessment of learning outcomes is conducted entirely by the awarding body.

1.40 The School delivers the new degree provision according to the assessment regulations of the respective awarding bodies. The BNU partnership agreement and Operations Manual for the BA and MSc programmes provides explicit guidance on assessment, marking and moderation and the operation of assessment boards. The University supplies all assessments for franchised programmes, while for the validated MSc in Global Investment and Finance, the School's draft assignments are subject to university and external examiner approval. Similarly, the University of Bedfordshire approval documents and Codified Procedures Manual state the University's assessment processes which the School is required to implement, with the University setting all assessments. Assessment Boards are managed by the universities, and external examiners are appointed to check the achievement of learning outcomes is demonstrated through assessment and confirm that academic standards are appropriate.

1.41 The review team concludes that the School has systems in place, in conjunction with its awarding bodies and organisations, to ensure that the award of credit and qualifications is made when achievement of learning outcomes is demonstrated through

assessment. The external examining arrangements ensure that UK threshold standards and the awarding bodies' or organisations' standards are achieved. Therefore the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met

Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.3): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that processes for the monitoring and review of programmes are implemented which explicitly address whether the UK threshold academic standards are achieved and whether the academic standards required by the individual degree-awarding body are being maintained.

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

Findings

1.42 As the School is not a degree-awarding body, it does not formally monitor and review alignment of its awards with UK threshold academic standards. It complies with its awarding bodies' and organisations' processes for programme monitoring and review and the maintenance of academic standards. This includes reflection on the reports of external examiners.

1.43 The awarding bodies and organisations undertake monitoring and review through the appointment of external examiners to check if student performance is meeting academic standards. The external examiners' reports explicitly comment on the maintenance of standards, and the School responds to these comments.

1.44 The School has developed policies and procedures to standardise assessment practices and to internally verify assessment decisions to ensure that awarding body or awarding organisation requirements are met. As stated in Expectation A2.1, the School is in the process of creating a Learning and Teaching Committee which will monitor and review the effectiveness of programmes including academic standards. The terms of reference for the committee are being finalised in consultation with awarding bodies.

1.45 The School has an internal process for monitoring and review through the preparation of an Annual Quality Assurance Report, with any required actions reported to the Academic Board and monitored to completion. Programme Committees are responsible for programme review and the outcomes are reported to the Academic Board.

1.46 The processes and procedures for monitoring and review operated by the School and its awarding bodies and organisations would enable the Expectation to be met.

1.47 In testing this Expectation, the review team scrutinised annual quality assurance reports, academic board minutes and action plans, programme committee minutes, and external examiners' reports. The team also questioned staff in meetings about the implementation of processes for annual monitoring and oversight of academic standards by the School.

1.48 The School fulfils its awarding bodies' and organisations' requirements in so far as it considers the reports of external examiners and responds to any recommendations.

1.49 The Annual Quality Assurance Report and action plan has provided an effective process for the School to monitor and review student performance and achievement of external qualifications. The action plan is followed up at meetings of the Academic Board, as well as the minutes of standardisation meetings and assessment policies and procedures. In 2016, the Academic Board decided that the Annual Quality Assurance Report would not be completed for 2015-2016 since the School was undergoing the QAA HER (AP) review and the School's self-evaluation document would include those matters covered by the report. This is discussed further in Expectation B8. The review team noted that only permanent staff and student representatives are members of the Programme Committees

and that sessional staff do not formally contribute to programme monitoring and review. This gap in monitoring and review processes contributed to the recommendation in Expectation B8, paragraph 2.87 relating to developing a standardised and systematic approach to the monitoring and review of programmes.

1.50 Overall, the evidence from documentation and meetings demonstrates that the School has processes in place to meet the requirements of its awarding organisations, and is in the process of developing new structures and procedures to accommodate its university partners. The review team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.4): In order to be transparent and publicly accountable, degree-awarding bodies use external and independent expertise at key stages of setting and maintaining academic standards to advise on whether:

- **UK threshold academic standards are set, delivered and achieved**
- **the academic standards of the degree-awarding body are appropriately set and maintained.**

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

Findings

1.51 Responsibility for ensuring appropriate external and independent expertise lies ultimately with the School's awarding bodies and organisations. The standards of the programmes currently offered by the School, and those starting in 2016-17, are set externally by the relevant awarding organisation or university which ultimately approves the awards. For most of its awards, the School is not responsible for programme design, although it initiated the design of the MSc and contributed to the design of the MBA (Global Banking).

1.52 Externality in this context is directly relevant to the School primarily with respect to awarding body or organisation monitoring and review processes which take place annually and add a further element of externality to the School's academic framework.

1.53 Given the nature of its provision, it is important to the School that it meets industry standards as well as academic standards. Its training activities in the investment and finance sector enable it to gather information about current industry needs.

1.54 The processes at the School in association with its awarding bodies and organisations would enable the Expectation to be met.

1.55 In testing this Expectation, the review team considered a range of documentation relating to the use of external and independent expertise, including external verifiers' reports, awarding body reviews, design and approval documentation, and internal quality assurance documentation. Discussions were held with senior staff and industry contacts.

1.56 The conceptualisation of the MSc (and two bespoke modules on the MBA Global Banking programme) was based on the applied knowledge of current industry needs and developed internally within the School's academic framework before detailed discussion began with the degree-awarding body. External expertise in the approval process of the MSc was provided by both academic and industry specialists.

1.57 The required academic standards for programmes are made clear to staff through induction, circulation of reports from awarding bodies or organisations, and in the course of the assessment verification process. Students are informed of these standards at induction, through the student handbook and through the formative assessment process. Programme committee meetings provide further context to student representatives.

1.58 As the School is connected with the industry on a global scale through its worldwide training activities and its alumni contacts, it obtains frequent informal feedback on its programmes from relevant external sources. This feedback is not currently formalised through minuted meetings with external advisers, nor is it reported formally to the Academic Board or to programme committee meetings.

1.59 Although some of the mechanisms are informal, external and independent expertise is used appropriately in the School's programmes. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met

Level of risk: Low

The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies and/or other awarding organisations: Summary of findings

1.60 In reaching its judgement about the maintenance of academic standards, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook. There are no features of good practice, recommendations or affirmations in this area, although there are links to a recommendation in Expectation B8 and to a recommendation in Expectation C.

1.61 The School works effectively with its awarding bodies and organisations to ensure that academic standards are maintained. The School is aware of, and fulfils, its responsibilities. However, the review team recognised the need for a standardised and systematic approach that includes staff members teaching on each programme in the monitoring and review processes (as explained in Expectation B8). The School has documentation including a Quality Assurance Manual that contains a range of key information. The team noted, however, that a systematic approach was needed to the review and updating of this information to ensure it is fit for purpose (as explained in Expectation C).

1.62 Overall, the School uses the processes of its awarding organisations effectively for academic standards to be maintained. The School is working effectively with its new awarding bodies to ensure that standards are also maintained across the new programmes.

1.63 All seven Expectations in this area are met and the level of risk is low. Therefore, the review team concludes that the maintenance of the academic standards of awards at the School **meets** UK expectations.

2 Judgement: The quality of student learning opportunities

Expectation (B1): Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective processes for the design, development and approval of programmes

Quality Code, Chapter B1: Programme Design, Development and Approval

Findings

2.1 All of the School's programmes were until recently designed and developed by its awarding organisations, Pearson, ATHE and CFA. New partnerships with two universities have led to the approval of franchised and validated degree programmes for which the School has developed new processes for programme development and approval. These developments have built on expertise at the School and market knowledge of global investment and finance.

2.2 The School's processes for programme development culminate in the submission of proposals to an awarding body for approval. The development process is outlined in the Quality Assurance Manual and entails an initial review of a proposal by senior management, approval of the programme design by the Academic Board, followed by implementation by the programme leader. The process has recently been augmented by a programme development and approval procedure which integrates with the design and approval processes of the School's university partners. The initial review includes consideration of the market for a programme, and development includes consultation with stakeholders.

2.3 The structures and processes for programme design, development and approval would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.4 In testing this Expectation, the review team considered the effectiveness of processes and procedures through examining approval and validation documentation, minutes of meetings, and programme specifications. The team also held meetings with senior, teaching and support staff, an awarding body representative, students, and employers and alumni.

2.5 The processes for development and approval of programmes are operating effectively, both in relation to the existing programmes delivered to the specification of awarding organisations, and the requirements of new university partners. For Pearson programmes, the School is responsible for designing the learning and teaching strategy and effective learning materials, and providing a tailored programme specification. This entails selecting appropriate units relevant to students' needs; planning schemes of work, and the design of unit assessments for learning outcomes. Pearson reports indicate that the School has undertaken these activities satisfactorily and there is evidence of appropriate planning of resources for new programmes.

2.6 The School complied with the approval procedures of university partners for the design, development and approval of new degree programmes being delivered from 2016. The team saw evidence of programme development with reference to external benchmarks. The process of design and development was informed by informal testing of programme ideas with employers as well as research into the demand for the programmes. For the MSc in Global Investment and Finance the School undertook extensive market research with banking organisations, alumni, and students attending banking courses.

2.7 The review team noted that the programme development and approval process stated in the Quality Assurance Manual did not include the process that is currently in operation with university awarding bodies. The School indicated that a review of the Manual is anticipated prior to the next academic year. The lack of up-to-date information contributed to the recommendation in Expectation C, paragraph 3.5 relating to the implementation of a systematic approach to the review and updating of key quality documentation.

2.8 Overall, the School has effective processes for programme design and approval which are proportionate for a small institution, and enable the requirements of awarding bodies and organisations to be met. Therefore the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B2): Recruitment, selection and admission policies and procedures adhere to the principles of fair admission. They are transparent, reliable, valid, inclusive and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes. They support higher education providers in the selection of students who are able to complete their programme.

Quality Code, Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education

Findings

2.9 The School in collaboration with its awarding partners manages the recruitment and admissions to all programmes and is responsible for ensuring that they recruit students who can complete their chosen programme of study. The School articulates its approach to recruitment and admissions in its admissions policy and Quality Assurance Manual which includes information surrounding the process for applying to study at the School and other details, such as, staff likely to be involved in the admissions process. Prospective students submit their applications to study online and are all interviewed. Applicants are permitted to request feedback on their performance from the School. The Director of Studies has the ultimate responsibility for deciding whether an offer should be made to applicants for the School's Pearson, ATHE, and CFA provision; admissions decisions on the School's new degree provision are subject to approval by the School's awarding partners. Oversight of the admissions and recruitment process is the responsibility of the Academic Board and Resource Committee in conjunction with the School's executive. Marketing and outreach activities alongside written and electronic publicity inform both the public and prospective students as to the School's higher education provision.

2.10 The processes in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.11 The review team tested the Expectation through meetings with senior staff, programme leaders, academic staff, and professional support staff. The review team also examined documentation relating to marketing, recruitment, and admissions.

2.12 The School is responsible for managing the recruitment and admissions process and committed to ensuring the process is both fair and robust. The School has drafted and approved a recruitment policy which articulates its approach to admissions and outlines key pieces of information including those staff likely to be involved in the admissions process and the actual process for submitting an application to study at the School.

2.13 Interested parties are invited and encouraged to contact the School and discuss their individual circumstances prior to their submitting a formal application which includes a statement of purpose for their chosen programme of study. Once an application has been screened and accepted by an admissions officer, a member of the senior management or programme management team will interview the applicant. All applicants are interviewed by the School, the feedback from which is forwarded to the Registrar for verification and then sent to the Director of Studies for final approval. Students are permitted to request feedback on their interview performance and application.

2.14 Verification, completed by the School's Registrar and Authorising Officer, ensures the School adheres to UKVI regulations. If the Director of Studies approves their offer, the applicant will be issued with an offer letter and, once those conditions have been fulfilled, the applicant is issued with a confirmation of acceptance for studies letter. In the event an offer is made; an enrolment officer will then complete the admissions process by preparing an induction pack and enrolling the student on the School's systems.

2.15 Applicants that are dissatisfied with the application and admissions process are permitted to lodge a complaint using the School's complaints policy, articulated within the School's Quality Assurance Manual. Unsuccessful applicants are also permitted to appeal against admissions decisions if they feel there has been an error in processing their application. Staff involved in recruitment, selection and admissions are provided with training and continual professional development opportunities. The Director of Studies has traditionally been responsible for determining whether an offer will be made to an applicant, however, for the new degree provision, the relevant awarding body has the final sign-off and approval of all offers made.

2.16 It is the responsibility of the Academic Board to decide the criteria for the admission of students to individual programmes, however, minutes from the Academic Board reflect only actions taken rather than discussion of admissions policies for various courses. The School's Resource Committee and Programme Committee are both responsible for setting recruitment targets and monitoring the admissions process for specific programmes, despite this, neither set of committee minutes reflect discussion or reporting of admissions. This leads to a risk that the School is not exercising effective institutional oversight of the recruitment process, therefore, the review team **recommends** that the School strengthens the mechanisms available to ensure the effective oversight of recruitment and admissions.

2.17 Online campaigns, agents and outreach activities complement published materials in marketing the School brand and increasing awareness about the higher education offer. Staff responsible for the recruitment and admissions process are also involved in the production and maintenance of published information.

2.18 The School, in association with its awarding bodies and organisations, has processes in place for recruitment, selection and admissions. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met, but the associated level of risk is moderate as the quality assurance procedures are broadly adequate, but have some shortcomings in terms of the rigour with which they are applied.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching*

Findings

2.19 The School's Learning and Teaching Strategy (2016-2020) articulates a number of broad aims and identifies key performance indicators and is reviewed annually.

2.20 It is the responsibility of programme committees and the Academic Board to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning and of programme delivery. This is done through consideration of evidence gathered from: student feedback on teaching and courses; student satisfaction; peer review of teaching; and external reviews.

2.21 The policies and procedures at the School would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.22 The review team tested this Expectation by scrutinising a range of quality assurance documentation including academic committee meeting minutes and reports, student feedback, staff evaluations, staff lists and curricula vitae of both permanent and sessional teaching staff. Several meetings were held with staff at all levels as well as with students and student representatives.

2.23 Academic Board minutes show that the recent updating of the Learning and Teaching Strategy was formally approved although there is no substantive discussion recorded in previous minutes. It will be developed further to take account of the Teaching Excellence Framework. Appropriate policies relating to staff and students are in place, included in the Quality Assurance Manual and made explicit to both staff and students.

2.24 Students are encouraged to engage in learning through a minimum attendance requirement and through formative feedback sessions before assignment due dates. Complementing physical teaching, the School uses bespoke live, online learning software and also has a virtual learning environment (VLE) accessible by all students. Students are able to access both quality-related documents and teaching resources through this VLE which is integrated with plagiarism-detection software.

2.25 Individual student feedback is sought at key points about: induction, each assignment, module and lecturer. Feedback is analysed and considered at the relevant programme committee meeting and at the Academic Board. These meetings provide student representatives with further opportunities to make suggestions which are acted upon by the School. Course representatives meet together as a group to provide more general feedback to the School.

2.26 The School's staffing model is to employ only some permanent teaching staff, together with a greater number of sessional teaching staff who are contracted for one year at a time to teach one or more modules in their area of expertise. Student teaching evaluations are summarised and considered programme by programme; sessional staff who do not achieve high scores are not employed again. Details of recruitment and selection, induction and training are specified in the Quality Assurance Manual. Teaching staff are required to have relevant lecturing and industry experience; many have established graduate and postgraduate teaching backgrounds.

2.27 This staffing model facilitates the inclusion of specialists as sessional lecturers in a niche market, to ensure an appropriate balance of professional and academic skills, especially at the master's level. A number of sessional staff have been employed year on year and teach on several programmes. Before staff contracts are finalised, individuals must submit a full teaching materials pack for their unit or module, including assessment materials, to the School. This ensures that, should staff be ill or otherwise do not complete their contract, another lecturer can be substituted to ensure continuity of the student learning experience. This substitution may be by an experienced sessional staff member, the programme leader, or a senior member of full-time teaching staff. This risk management approach mitigates the potential disruption for students. Sessional staff CVs provided to the team demonstrate breadth of expertise and experience. Students and student representatives who met the team expressed satisfaction with their lecturers and the support which they provide.

2.28 New staff receive an induction to the School, usually on a one-to-one basis, and are assigned a mentor. Appropriate continuing professional development (CPD) records are maintained for permanent staff though not for sessional staff. One external review report recommended the School to consider minimum continued professional development for all teaching staff.

2.29 Sharing of good practice among staff takes place informally. Peer observation of all teaching staff takes place for each module. The review team were told that the dissemination of good practice from peer observation takes place at programme committee and assessment standardisation meetings. However, this discussion is not minuted formally, nor are all staff present. Good practice identified from external sources, such as external verifiers' reports, is made available to teaching staff through the Quality Assurance Report and through ad hoc meetings, but there is no formal mechanism whereby internally identified good practice can be shared more widely. Given that not all teaching staff are members of the relevant programme committee, the team took the view that this represents a missed opportunity to share good practice within the full programme team and across all teaching staff. The team therefore **recommends** that the School develop the arrangements for the identification and sharing of good practice across all teaching staff.

2.30 Programme committee meetings include student representatives, thus enabling direct feedback, but not sessional teaching staff. As a result, not all teaching staff are fully integrated into the programme team and so are unable to provide direct input to the systematic monitoring and review of programmes, although staff who met the review team confirmed that they feel part of a team and have ready informal access to other staff. Senior staff acknowledged that it would be a straightforward matter to invite all teaching staff to the relevant programme committee meetings and this links to the recommendation in Expectation B8, paragraph 2.87 and the inclusion of these staff members in programme monitoring and review.

2.31 The opportunities for student feedback, both through surveys and through course representatives, come through clearly in the minutes of the School's academic committees. Students have both informal and formal means of giving feedback, and the School is responsive to it. Although student handbooks include the heading 'Teaching and Learning' only assessment is discussed in detail.

2.32 Based on consideration of the School procedures and of its learning and teaching resources (including staff) the team concludes that the Expectation is met. However, the associated level of risk is moderate due to the insufficient emphasis on arrangements for the identification and sharing of good practice across all teaching staff.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

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

Quality Code, Chapter B4: Enabling Student Development and Achievement

Findings

2.33 The Academic Board has overall responsibility for academic quality and programme leaders are individually responsible for liaison with awarding bodies and organisations and day-to-day management of their programmes. The Director of Studies, together with programme leaders, are responsible for detailed resource allocation; all staff are responsible for completion of relevant actions.

2.34 The Resource Committee is responsible for approving requests from the Academic Board for all resources to support students and programmes, and is advised by the Board on changes to academic activities. Course representatives are invited to attend the relevant programme committee which can report to the Resource Committee any issues concerning resourcing.

2.35 The School's policies and procedures would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.36 In testing this Expectation, the team considered a range of quality documentation, including policy documents, student handbooks, careers provision documentation and online information. Meetings were held with a range of staff, students, alumni and industry contacts.

2.37 The School operates on two sites: Canary Wharf (investment banking training at weekends) and Bow Road (full-time programmes during the week). A flexible live, online learning system enables students to participate remotely if they are unable to attend in person. Physical resources at both sites are as required by the awarding bodies and organisations (library and computer facilities).

2.38 The School provides some staff development activities for its permanent staff, who also receive support from the School in furthering their own studies. However, no provision is made for sessional staff, other than discussion of assessment practices at standardisation meetings, and this links to the recommendation included in Expectation B3, paragraph 2.29.

2.39 The Quality Assurance Manual outlines the personal practical support services available to students. These are provided by full-time staff, whether administrative staff, programme leaders or senior staff, and include English support, assistance with accommodation issues and orientation for international students.

2.40 Induction for each programme takes students through School and programme requirements, including feedback points and universities are participating in the relevant induction. Student evaluation of induction is mandatory and feedback is considered carefully; students who cannot attend have a one-to-one induction with the Programme Leader. The School's attendance policy highlights when a student should be seen individually by their programme leader to discuss reasons for absence; reasons for non-completion of the course are monitored.

2.41 Academic support for students is provided primarily through timetabled formative assessment opportunities with the relevant lecturer; if, for any reason, that person is no longer available, then another experienced staff member takes over. The School operates an open-door policy which is appreciated by students. Although there is no policy in place to establish a formalised personal tutor system, students confirmed that they were able to take

any problems to their programme leader or to administrative and even directly to senior staff in the School. The relative numbers of staff and students is currently able to support this informal system.

2.42 Student feedback on School facilities is generally positive and suggestions for improvements are taken on board. Students on the new programmes have access to the School's and the University's VLE in addition to the School's live, online system. Students are enthusiastic about the VLE and those who met the team indicated that they were comfortable using two platforms for different purposes.

2.43 In some cases, students have received job offers and been allowed to complete their studies remotely, an example of how the School's learning resources facilitate flexibility in the mode of delivery.

2.44 The School attaches great importance to both skills and careers development in its provision. Its focus on student employability is explicit and demonstrated through its careers guidance and employability activities. The Global Investment and Banking career workshop programme includes specialised 'content' sessions. It includes individual sessions focusing on CV review, a mock interview, and discussion and identification of individualised job strategies. The Valuation Olympiad is valued by students and even new students are aware of this opportunity. Students and alumni who met the team were positive about the career advice and guidance they received from the start of their programme and for alumni, after they leave. Industry contacts confirmed the job-readiness of students. The School has built on the good practice identified in previous reviews by employing a Relationship Manager to assist in placing students in jobs after completion of their course. The team considers the strategic focus on employability and extensive careers support for students which enable them to develop their academic, personal and professional potential to be **good practice**.

2.45 The School maintains a clear focus on the development of students' academic, personal and professional potential. The individualised support available to students through formative feedback sessions and the many close links with industry contribute to a supportive learning environment. Based on the range and level of appropriate support available to all students the team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B5): Higher education providers take deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience.

Quality Code, Chapter B5: Student Engagement

Findings

2.46 The School aims to engage and involve students in quality assurance processes through student representation in committees, student feedback, and the production of a student written submission. Students and student representatives attend student-staff liaison committees, programme committees, and meetings of the School's academic board. Students are encouraged to work with senior and programme management to enact change at the School. The School monitors the effectiveness of student engagement initiatives through annual quality assurance reports and action plans, a student-written submission, and their engagement and attendance at quality assurance committees and groups.

2.47 The processes in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.48 The review team tested the Expectation through meetings with senior staff, programme leaders, teaching staff, students, student representatives, and support staff. The review team also examined documentation relating to student engagement, including committee meeting minutes, student feedback analysis and the student written submission.

2.49 Students are engaged with quality assurance processes through a number of mechanisms including student feedback and student-staff liaison committees. Students are also encouraged to contribute to and produce an annual student-written submission for the purposes of ongoing external quality assurance reviews (Review for Educational Oversight, annual monitoring and the current Higher Education Review for Alternative Providers).

2.50 Students are invited to feedback at regular intervals, such as after their induction to the School and following the completion of assessment pieces. Induction feedback is collected, collated, and reported to the School's Programme Committee; minutes of the programme committee reflect acknowledgement and discussion of student feedback. Students are also invited to complete teaching evaluations that are then used to assess members of teaching staff. Students on ATHE and Pearson programmes are also asked to provide feedback on individual units which is then collected and reported to the School's Programme Committee. Students on CFA programmes submit termly feedback; it is then discussed at Programme Committee. Following consideration, student feedback is fed up to the School's highest academic decision-making committee, the Academic Board for consideration.

2.51 Students are further engaged in the School's quality assurance processes through the established representation structures. The School encourages students to run for, and be elected to, course representative positions on each of their programmes. There is at least one course representative per cohort of each programme. Once elected, student representatives are fully inducted into their new role, provided with a student representative handbook and invited to attend various workshops and training events run by the School's Quality Manager. Completed evaluations from these workshops and briefings indicate student representatives are satisfied with the breadth and depth of the training that they receive.

2.52 Student-staff liaison committees were scheduled on a monthly basis to discuss issues having an impact on the student learning experience, however, due to low attendance, the School informed the review team that alternative arrangements were being

considered to ensure that all students are appropriately engaged in quality assurance processes. Students and student representatives are invited to attend meetings of the Academic Board, the relevant programme committee meetings and will be invited to the Learning and Teaching Committee. Student representatives are not invited to attend the School's Resource Committee.

2.53 The review team heard that with the School moving to provide franchised and validated programmes on behalf of various degree-awarding bodies, students on those programmes will be entitled to engage with the partners associated students' union. Moreover, as the School enrolls more students on degree programmes, the School will seek to engage students with the National Student Survey and work closely with its awarding partners to develop initiatives to improve the student experience.

2.54 The School indicated that student engagement in quality assurance is monitored and reviewed regularly, however, the review team found documentary evidence to this effect lacking. The School's annual quality assurance report, compiled by the Quality Manager, is one method the School uses to ensure institutional monitoring of the effectiveness of student engagement initiatives, however, discussion and evaluation of student engagement initiatives do not feature. Therefore, the review team **recommends** the School strengthen the mechanisms for reviewing student engagement initiatives.

2.55 Overall, the School has mechanisms to involve students as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met, but that the associated level of risk is moderate as quality assurance procedures are broadly adequate, but have some shortcomings in terms of the rigour with which they are applied.

Expectation: Met

Level of risk: Moderate

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

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

Findings

2.56 The School has an assessment policy which indicates assessment principles, arrangements for submission of work, assessment, and feedback. This acknowledges that the School follows the awarding bodies' and organisations' rules and procedures for the recognition of prior learning and progression. The School has ready access to documentation on its awarding bodies' and organisations' policies and assessment regulations. The processes of assessment vary according to the awarding body or organisation, and the School has some level of delegated responsibility for assessment from each.

2.57 There are further policies and procedures setting out the arrangements for internal verification and standardisation of assessment to meet awarding body and organisation requirements, and to deal with any learners' malpractice.

2.58 The arrangements that the School has put in place in conjunction with its awarding bodies and organisations for the design, marking and moderation of assessment together with the external examining arrangements would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.59 In testing this Expectation, the review team considered documentation relating to the processes of assessment including awarding body and organisation assessment procedures, School policies, student handbooks, programme specifications and module descriptors. The team reviewed documentation on the operation of assessment including assessment packs, internal verification forms, and external examiners' reports. The team also met staff and students to discuss the operation of assessment and feedback processes.

2.60 The School complies with its awarding bodies' and organisations' policies and regulations and obtains approval for assessment methods through the programme approval and validation process. Intended learning outcomes and associated assessments are stated in programme specifications which are approved by awarding bodies and organisations. These awarding partners appoint external examiners to check that assessment is conducted in accordance with their regulations, and that assessments measure student achievement against the intended learning outcomes.

2.61 The School has policies and procedures for assessment, internal verification and standardisation of assessment outcomes for its Pearson and ATHE provision. Standardisation meetings are held to agree assignment briefs and assessment criteria. Learning outcomes in module descriptors are used to design assessment and marking schemes, and internal verification confirms that the level is appropriate. Student assignments for the Pearson provision, and marked assessments for both awarding organisations, are reviewed through an internal moderation process prior to submission to the external examiner for verification that the student has met the assessment criteria and the level descriptor. However, recent external examiners' reports indicate some criticisms of the School's assessment and verification process. The ATHE external examiner noted that assessors have a tendency to make invalid assessment judgements which were not identified at internal verification, and advised that internal verifiers should be more careful in

checking assessment judgements regarding the achievement of learning outcomes. Also the Pearson external examiner report notes a need for more robust internal verification with clear evidence of changes made to assignment briefs, and that assessors should ensure that all assessment criteria are met when awarding merit and distinction grades. The School has taken appropriate action to address these criticisms; the Executive Dean ran a workshop for assessors and now samples internal verification reports to ensure that the awarding organisation's assessment requirements are met. Summative assessments are submitted to external examiners appointed by the awarding bodies and organisations before confirmation of results.

2.62 For BNU programmes, the University sets all assessments for the franchised BA Business and Finance, and the School sets assessments for the validated MSc Global Investment and Finance, which entails sending draft assessment briefs and examination papers to the partnership tutor for moderation and then approval by external examiners. The mode of MSc summative assessment was subject to development during the University validation process to ensure that the variety of assessments were appropriate to the learning outcomes. There are arrangements in place to assist the School's tutors to conduct valid and reliable processes of assessment. In the first academic term, both BNU and the School tutors will first mark assessments and any discrepancies will be discussed as part of staff development to ensure consistency of marking. Subsequently, the School will mark all assessments and BNU tutors will moderate.

2.63 For University of Bedfordshire programmes which are being delivered under a franchise agreement, assessments will be set by staff at the University and approved by the external examiner. Students will submit work electronically for first marking to be carried out by School staff, followed by moderation by University staff.

2.64 The arrangements with awarding bodies and organisations for setting, marking, moderating and external examination enable the School to operate effective processes of assessment. There are clear processes for designing, conducting and marking assignments and examinations, for example in the operating manuals for the degree programmes. The required standards are made clear to staff through induction and standardisation meetings, circulation of reports from awarding bodies and organisations, and in the course of the assessment verification process.

2.65 The School's assessment policies and processes are well understood by staff and students. Information on assessment is given to teaching staff and students during their induction, and the assessment policy, regulations and processes are clearly stated in student handbooks issued at induction and also accessible through the School's VLE. Assessment arrangements and updates are discussed and explained to student representatives at programme committee meetings, for onward dissemination to students. Matters include information that module assessment packs have been uploaded, the arrangements for online assignment submission, and for student completion of automated assignment feedback on the VLE.

2.66 The School's Quality Assurance Manual is the central document for staff and students for information on quality assurance and policies relating to assessment. However, at the time of the visit, the manual did not have up-to-date information on assessment and moderation arrangements for the new partnerships operating from the 2016-17 academic year. This finding contributed to the recommendation in Expectation C, paragraph 3.5, that the School should implement a systematic approach to the review and updating of key quality documentation.

2.67 Students are clear about what is expected and how marks and grades are awarded. Programme specifications and student handbooks state intended learning outcomes and

assessment processes, and assignment briefs are clearly set out. Students are given guidance on good academic practice and the avoidance of plagiarism at induction and frequently during class sessions. The School recently had an alleged case of academic malpractice on the ATHE programme when a student reported to ATHE that some assignments were written by a third party. The School undertook an investigation and the awarding organisation accepted that the School had taken all reasonable actions to ensure that students' work is their own. The requirement for all programmes to submit assignments electronically through the School or University VLE, which integrates with plagiarism-detection software should provide appropriate detection of malpractice. Furthermore, the assessment strategy is designed to prevent academic offences, with many assignments requiring students to use their own experiences as examples. Students confirmed that they receive clear instructions on good academic practice.

2.68 Feedback to students on assessment is regular and thorough, with helpful comments for improvement. Academic timetables include sessions for formative feedback and this is valued by students. Turnaround times on summative work are within three weeks for assessments for all awarding bodies and organisations. External examiner reports have generally stated that assessor feedback is clear, supportive and constructive.

2.69 Overall, the review team concludes that the School has valid and reliable assessment processes. It complies with the requirements of its awarding bodies and organisations, and students are able to demonstrate achievement of the intended learning outcomes through the effective operation of assessment processes, that are confirmed by external examiners. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, Chapter B7: External Examining

Findings

2.70 Nomination and appointment of external examiners or verifiers is the responsibility of the relevant awarding body or organisation. The School is required to follow the regulations of these awarding partners and is responsible for responding to external examiner and verifier reports and implementing recommendations as necessary.

2.71 The processes at the School in association with its awarding bodies and organisations would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.72 In testing this Expectation, the review team scrutinised relevant quality assurance documentation including external verifiers' reports, committee minutes and action plans. Discussions took place with students and staff at all levels about the role of external verifiers and examiners.

2.73 Reports are received by the Quality Manager and forwarded to programme leaders to implement and report on any actions required. Action plans are maintained by the Quality Manager and completion is reported to the relevant programme committee and to the Academic Board. Reports are made available to students at programme committee meetings and through the VLE.

2.74 As full degree provision only began in September 2016, there were no external examiner reports available. Pearson and ATHE carry out annual reviews or health checks. Reports from these organisations are generally positive. Recommendations in reports from both awarding organisations were considered, addressed as requested and confirmed as completed.

2.75 In accordance with the School's arrangements, formal reporting of recommendations from external examiners or verifiers and implementation should take place through the committee structure (including student representatives). However, the terms of reference and the meeting minutes do not always explicitly reflect this and this links to the recommendation in Expectation B8 paragraph 2.86.

2.76 There is some discussion of external examiner or verifier reports in programme committee minutes as well as at the Academic Board, but there is scope for consideration as to how these reports could be used to further inform internal programme review processes as discussed in Expectation B8. Students confirmed that they were aware of where to access the reports on the VLE.

2.77 There is clear evidence supporting the effective use of external verifiers and examiners. Staff and students are appropriately engaged. The review team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review

Findings

2.78 The School has varying responsibilities for programme monitoring and review depending on the awarding body or organisation. The School's Quality Assurance Manual sets out the responsibilities of academic committees and post holders for programme monitoring and review. Programme Committees and Programme Leaders undertake regular programme reviews and the outcomes are submitted to the Academic Board for ongoing monitoring.

2.79 The awarding organisations, with the exception of CFA, have processes for annual monitoring and periodic review. Pearson requires the School to routinely monitor and periodically review programmes and undertakes an annual visit to check centre quality assurance systems, including policies and procedures for review and improvement. ATHE undertakes annual monitoring and both it and CFA take responsibility for periodic review. The university awarding bodies have specific requirements for annual monitoring and periodic review, and procedures are to be put in place during the 2016-17 academic year.

2.80 The processes and procedures operated by the School in conjunction with its awarding bodies and organisations would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.81 In testing this Expectation, the review team considered the terms of reference and minutes of meetings including academic board and programme committee minutes and action plans, as well as annual quality assurance reports. The team also held meetings with senior staff, teaching and support staff and students.

2.82 The School is committed to continuous improvement and monitors effectiveness in the provision of appropriate learning opportunities through its committee structure of programme committees reporting to the Academic Board. Meetings of both committees are held four times per year, and membership includes student representatives.

2.83 As well as discussion in programme committees, the School involves students in monitoring and review processes through student feedback on teaching. The School also has an internal process for monitoring and review which entails the preparation of an annual quality assurance report, with any required actions reported to the Academic Board.

2.84 The processes are working effectively in so far as they meet the requirements of the awarding bodies and organisations and engage full-time teaching staff and students in monitoring and review through programme committees. There is clear evidence of action planning and monitoring of the completion of actions by the Academic Board. The School has completed a quality assurance report in previous years, with any required actions reported to the Academic Board for monitoring to completion. However, the School decided not to complete a report for 2015-16 as it anticipated duplication with the QAA HER (AP) review. While the review team understood the reasoning behind this decision, an annual report and action plan could have provided an effective vehicle for reviewing external examiner reports and contributed to the School's internal processes for ensuring that the academic standards of the awarding bodies and organisations are maintained.

2.85 The Academic Board is the senior committee in the School with overall responsibility for the quality of provision however its terms of reference do not indicate its role in relation to the monitoring and review of programmes. The School is in the process of creating a Learning and Teaching Committee as a sub-group of the Academic Board, which will have responsibility for monitoring and review of the effectiveness of the arrangements for programme management. The terms of reference of the committee are being finalised in consultation with the School's university partners to ensure that their requirements are accommodated.

2.86 The review team found instances where the content of committee minutes was inconsistent with the stated terms of reference. For example, the terms of reference of each academic committee include responsibilities relating to external examiners, but it is not made explicit which committee receives and considers reports and responses. Senior staff said that programme leaders are responsible for responding to reports and that programme committees ensure that actions are completed, while the minutes show that the Academic Board discussed the 2015-16 external examiner reports and action plan prior to the programme committee. Minutes of the Academic Board and Resource Committee meetings demonstrate the attention paid to student needs and programme requirements including, for example, student suggestions and the ongoing development of the VLE. However, minutes do not always capture how extensive the discussion has been nor what evidence has been presented. The School acknowledged that as a small institution, issues arising from external reports or programme committee meetings can be resolved but not documented. As the School expands its higher education provision, effective monitoring and oversight will require formal reporting through the committee structure of matters such as external examiners' reports and the School action in response to any recommendations. Therefore the review team **recommends** that the School should ensure that the operation of committees reflects their terms of reference and that records of meetings aid effective institutional oversight and monitoring of the provision.

2.87 The agenda for programme committees has evolved since the first meetings were held in 2015. The minutes show that regular items are the provision of information to students on teaching and assessment, the VLE and the analysis of student feedback, and discussion of course representatives' issues and suggestions. The senior staff indicated that a standard agenda has recently been introduced, and that in future, it is proposed to have more statistical data. However, sessional teaching staff are not invited to participate in programme committees and do not have a direct contribution to the systematic monitoring and review of programmes. Senior staff indicated that in future, sessional staff will be invited to the meetings and receive programme committee minutes so that they can provide comments if they are unable to attend. Also, sessional staff are involved in the programme team through standardisation meetings, marking and internal verification. The review team took the view that the sessional staff are not routinely and effectively involved in programme monitoring and review and therefore **recommends** that the School develop and implement a standardised and systematic approach that includes staff members teaching on each programme in the monitoring and review of those programmes. This recommendation is related to the School's arrangements for programme monitoring and review and not linked to the effects of any turnover in staff.

2.88 Overall, the team found that meeting minutes do not provide sufficient evidence of a robust, systematic and effective internal process for monitoring and review of programmes which enables all teaching staff to participate. A standard template for programme monitoring to ensure that the same aspects are considered and followed up across the provision is in an early stage of development. Therefore the review team concludes that the Expectation is not met and the associated risk is moderate because it relates to weaknesses in the operation of part of the provider's governance structures. The risk is moderate rather than serious as the School is subject to the monitoring and review procedures of its

awarding bodies and organisations, which assure academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities.

Expectation: Not met

Level of risk: Moderate

Expectation (B9): Higher education providers have procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints about the quality of learning opportunities; these procedures are fair, accessible and timely, and enable enhancement.

Quality Code, Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints

Findings

2.89 The School has a student complaints and academic appeals policy. Students may submit complaints directly to the School; if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint to the School, they may approach the relevant awarding partner to seek an external review of their complaint, and in the case of programmes awarded by either Bucks New University or the University of Bedfordshire, students may access the Office of the Independent Adjudicator's Higher Education scheme. Academic appeals are dealt with, in most cases, jointly between the School and their awarding partners. Students on Pearson programmes and courses validated and franchised from the School's awarding bodies may submit academic appeals to the School before approaching the relevant awarding partner. Students on ATHE and CFA programmes may approach the relevant awarding organisation directly to submit an academic appeal.

2.90 The processes in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.91 The review team tested the Expectation through meetings with senior staff, students and student representatives. The team also examined documentation relating to student complaints and academic appeals examining them in light of the School's awarding partners' academic frameworks.

2.92 The School's complaints policy briefly outlines the process by which a student can submit a non-academic complaint. If an informal discussion with the Registrar leads to a non-satisfactory resolution, the student may submit a formal complaint by completing the complaint procedure form and submitting it to the programme leader. There is a clear process for this to be escalated and students can ultimately appeal the decision to the Director of Studies. In the eventuality the student exhausts the School's internal processes, they can appeal to their awarding body or organisation; students on University programmes are also able to approach the Office of the Independent Adjudicator and access the higher education resolution scheme via their awarding body despite the School itself not being a subscriber.

2.93 Students who believe their work has been marked unfairly, inconsistently or not in accordance with the standards and level required by the awarding body or organisation, have the right to appeal against the mark or final outcome. Students are permitted to submit academic appeals to both the School and the relevant awarding partner. There are clear procedures and associated timescales for this process within the School. Appeals relating to externally-assessed work or examinations must be directed to the awarding organisation rather than the School.

2.94 Information on submitting a non-academic complaint and academic appeal is included in all student handbooks. Moreover, the full student complaints and academic appeals policies are included within the School's quality assurance manual that is available to all students and staff via the School's VLE. Information is also provided during the student induction process. Meetings with students during the review visit confirmed their understanding and knowledge of complaint and academic appeal processes.

2.95 The School, in association with its awarding bodies and organisations, has effective procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints. Therefore, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met

Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

2.96 As the School is not a degree-awarding body, this Expectation applies to its relationship with placement providers. To date, the School has not had any students on placements, and there are no placements included in the BA degree programme.

2.97 An internship module is an alternative to a dissertation for MSc students if undertaken in a country where they are permitted to work. A similar opportunity is included in the MBA (Global Banking) programme due to start in 2017. If this option is taken up, the relevant University procedures will be followed.

2.98 The arrangements in place enable the Expectation to be met in so far as it is currently applicable.

2.99 In testing this Expectation, the team scrutinised quality documentation including programme specifications and student handbooks as well as holding discussions with senior staff to clarify the future situation.

2.100 Although the HND programme specification and student handbook refers to a placement option, the team were told that this unit could not be offered due to changes in the regulations relating to international students and therefore a unit in Business Law is being substituted instead.

2.101 The MSc programme specification includes a work placement (internship) option, as does the MBA, but the current version of the Quality Assurance Manual does not include a reference to the associated School procedures. It was explained to the review team that, should students wish to take this option, the School would follow the relevant University guidelines, as outlined in the student handbook. The review team recognises that as university processes may differ in operation, it is reasonable not to include full placement details for every programme in the Quality Assurance Manual. Nevertheless, in the forthcoming updating of the Manual it would be appropriate to include information pointing students to where details are found in the relevant student handbook. This, therefore, contributes to the recommendation in Expectation C, paragraph 3.5, in relation to the need to implement a systematic approach to the review and updating of key quality documentation.

2.102 Given that the School has not yet had any students on work placements, and that sufficient suitable information is currently available to students, the team concludes that the Expectation is met and that the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B11): Research degrees are awarded in a research environment that provides secure academic standards for doing research and learning about research approaches, methods, procedures and protocols. This environment offers students quality of opportunities and the support they need to achieve successful academic, personal and professional outcomes from their research degrees.

Quality Code, *Chapter B11: Research Degrees*

Findings

2.103 The School does not offer research degrees

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.104 In reaching its judgements about the quality of student learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook. Six out of the 10 applicable Expectations in this area were met with low risk, three were met with a moderate risk and one was not met with a moderate risk. The review team has identified one feature of good practice and five recommendations, with an additional link to a recommendation in Expectation C.

2.105 The review team identified recommendations in relation to the mechanisms available at the School to enable effective monitoring and oversight. The team highlighted the need for these mechanisms to be strengthened in relation to the oversight of recruitment and admissions in Expectation B2 which was met but with a moderate risk and also in relation to the monitoring of student engagement initiatives in Expectation B5.

2.106 The team carefully considered the staffing model in place at the School as this has been associated with the Concern submitted to the QAA Concerns Scheme. The Concern related to issues created by a high staff turnover and its impact on the quality of student learning opportunities including consistent support for students, assessment and the provision of feedback. The high staff turnover was also linked to the lack of a systematic programme monitoring and review process and an additional issue was raised in relation to programmes being delivered over a period of time much shorter than that approved. The School has a core team of full-time staff and supplements this with specialist teaching staff, often on a module-by-module basis, although these teaching contracts are usually for the duration of a year. Contracts are terminated if staff members receive negative student feedback or do not reach the required standards in teaching observations. If this situation occurs within a module, the School has arrangements for the continuation of teaching by an experienced member of staff to ensure that students are not disadvantaged. The School benefits from a range of staff members bringing specialist knowledge and experience, although these staff members are not formally involved in the identification and sharing of expertise. The review team therefore found that Expectation B3 was met, but with an associated moderate risk and the team recommends that the School develops the arrangements for the identification and sharing of good practice across all teaching staff.

2.107 The approach to staffing also contributed to Expectation B8 in terms of the involvement of all teaching staff in the processes for programme monitoring and review. The team concludes that B8 is not met, with an associated moderate risk and recommended that the School develops and implements a standardised and systematic approach that includes staff members teaching on each programme in the monitoring and review of those programmes. This recommendation is related to the School's overall arrangements for programme monitoring and review and not linked to the effects of any turnover in staff. In addition to this, the team considered the operation of the School's committees and recommended that the School ensures that the operation of committees reflects their terms of reference and that meeting records aid effective institutional oversight and monitoring of the provision.

2.108 Following its examination of the staffing model at the School and the arrangements in place to support, assess and provide feedback to students, the review team concluded that the Concern was not upheld. The School does use student feedback and teaching evaluations in its decisions to terminate or not renew staff teaching contracts, however, there are arrangements in place to support students should this occur within the delivery of a module. The team considered the School's approach to the delivery and assessment of modules and did not identify any specific issues relating to the Concern. In contrast,

the team did conclude that Expectation B8 was not met, with an associated moderate level of risk. However, this conclusion was reached on the basis of the lack of inclusion of part time or sessional staff in the formal arrangements for programme monitoring and review rather than being attributed to issues associated with any turnover of staff as outlined in the submission to the Concerns Scheme. In concluding that B8 was not met, the team also identified weaknesses in the operation of the committee structure at the School, but attributed a moderate rather than a serious risk owing to the oversight from the awarding bodies and organisations.

2.109 The School has a range of policies and procedures contained in its Quality Assurance Manual and the team has acknowledged the effective use of these in a number of Expectations. However, the team also made a link to the recommendation in Expectation C in relation to the review and updating of this key quality documentation.

2.110 In addition to the recommendations identified, the team acknowledged the positive contributions of the focus on employability and the commitment shown to integrate career development initiatives. Therefore, in Expectation B4 the team highlighted the strategic focus on employability and extensive careers support for students which enables them to develop their academic, personal and professional potential as good practice.

2.111 Overall, the review team found good practice at the School in terms of the employability support for students. The recommendations relate to amendments that will not require or result in major structural, operational or procedural change. Following its examination of the arrangements in place at the School, the team did not uphold the Concern. The review team therefore concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities at the School **meets** UK expectations.

3 Judgement: The quality of the information about learning opportunities

Expectation (C): UK higher education providers produce information for their intended audiences about the higher education they offer that is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

Quality Code, Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision

Findings

3.1 The School does not have a formal policy relating to the production and maintenance of published information, however, there are established processes in place to ensure the appropriateness and accuracy of this. The School uses its website to make information available to applicants and successful applicants undergo an induction and are issued with a student handbook detailing various School policies and procedures. The School works with its awarding partners, the School's senior management, business development team, and Academic Board ensure the information that they publish is fit for purpose, accessible, and trustworthy.

3.2 The processes in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

3.3 The review team tested the Expectation through meetings with senior staff, programme leaders, students, student representatives, and support staff. The team also examined documentation relating to the publication and management of published information for the public, students, staff, and those involved with managing quality processes.

3.4 The School has both a website and internal VLE that it uses to disseminate information to the public, prospective students, current students, graduates, and staff. Information pertinent to prospective applicants, including entry requirements and possible future career pathways is made available via the School website. The School's academic and central service departments promote the School's higher education offer using social media and via traditional outreach events, such as recruitment fairs and careers workshops. Prospective applicants are encouraged to contact the School with admissions queries and download detailed programme brochures. Given the School is moving towards providing further University provision, it has established approval and monitoring processes with its awarding partners to ensure the correctness and currency of programme brochures and specifications.

3.5 Students are enrolled and provided with a full induction to the School and a student handbook which includes the assessment policy and guidance on the avoidance of plagiarism. Assignment briefs provide further information to current students relating to assessed work allowing them to reach their academic potential. Students are able to access information relating to policies and procedures through the VLE, primarily through accessing the School's Quality Assurance Manual which includes the School's mission, vision and overall strategy along with mapping to the Quality Code. It is clear that the School is careful to develop and refine its quality assurance documentation on a regular basis. The introduction to the Quality Assurance Manual notes that it is not a static document and is usually updated annually. There are some minor inconsistencies in the 2016 version between feedback and evaluation templates and forms used in practice, as well as some omissions. For example, additional diagrammatic information showing the process for the development of new degrees was provided, but this level of detail was missing from the relevant section of the Manual. Furthermore, the review team was told that there would

probably be two updates during the 2016-17 academic year, mainly to reflect the new degree provision and requirements of the new awarding bodies. It would not have been possible to include information on the MBA programmes, for example, as these had not been approved by the start of the academic year. Nevertheless, it is vital that key quality documentation is complete, up to date, and maintained on an annual basis so that staff and students are clear as to which is the definitive version for each academic year. The review team therefore **recommends** that the School implement a systematic approach to the review and updating of key quality documentation to ensure that the information is fit for purpose.

3.6 Students have access to a range of information before and during their studies. Upon completion of their programmes, they are issued with full certificate/diplomas from the appropriate awarding partner. The School's Academic Board has responsibility for exercising institutional oversight of information and overseeing the publication and review processes. The School also uses a public information checklist, completed by the Business Development Manager, which records modifications to published material ensuring that information is fit for purpose, accessible, and trustworthy.

3.7 Overall, the review team concludes that the School produces information that largely fit for purpose and is both accessible and trustworthy. The recommendation relates to the need to update documentation that will not require major change. Therefore, the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

3.8 In reaching its judgement relating to the quality of information about learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low. There is one recommendation and no features of good practice or affirmations in this area.

3.9 The School makes effective use of its website and VLE in providing a range of information relating to its higher education offer. Students are provided with handbooks for their programmes and staff members produce assessment packs. Student handbooks are comprehensive and clear and students regard the information provided as helpful.

3.10 The School has a range of policies and uses its Quality Assurance Manual as the key reference point. The School is currently in a transitional time as it moves to different provision with new degree awarding bodies. The review team noted that the Quality Assurance Manual did not contain the most current information and this is linked to the recommendation for the School to implement a systematic approach to the review and updating of key quality documentation to ensure that the information is current and consistent. This recommendation relates to the need to update documentation that will not require major change and therefore the Expectation was met with a low risk.

3.11 The review team concludes that the quality of the information about learning opportunities at the School **meets** UK expectations.

4 Judgement: The enhancement of student learning opportunities

Expectation (Enhancement): Deliberate steps are being taken at provider level to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities.

Findings

4.1 The School's approach to the enhancement of learning opportunities is underpinned by its mission to provide globally recognised banking programmes. The Learning and Teaching Strategy defines ten performance indicators for development as 'a premier and innovative provider of specialist programmes for the investment banking and finance sectors'. In pursuance of this goal, enhancement initiatives focus on the employability of students and the use of learning technologies to enhance accessibility.

4.2 The Learning and Teaching Strategy is the main strategic driver for the enhancement of student learning opportunities at the School and has recently been revised to cover the period 2016-20. The strategy defines the School as providing university level education together with global industry skills found in professional qualifications such as the CFA, and linking this with career development and training to produce graduates who are ready to function in the investment banking industry. The strategy's performance indicators include a customer satisfaction rate in module feedback in excess of 90 per cent; an 85 per cent progression target; a target for graduate destinations of 80 per cent entering a role reflecting the specialism and level of their programme; and all programmes to use learning technologies to the fullest extent. In relation to the enhancement of learning opportunities, the strategy commits the School to ensuring students gain the graduate attributes to support the development of a successful career, through enrichment of the curriculum, and extension of the use of learning technologies to enhance accessibility.

4.3 Progress in the achievement of the strategic performance indicators will be measured and reported in the Annual Quality Assurance Report. The new Learning and Teaching Committee is to be responsible for monitoring progress and providing reports to the Academic Board.

4.4 The School's commitment to continuous improvement of the students' learning experience and the structures and initiatives in place to support enhancement would enable the Expectation to be met.

4.5 In testing this Expectation, the review team considered the School's Learning and Teaching Strategy and checked minutes of senior level meetings for evidence of planned improvements in the quality of students' learning opportunities. In addition, the team held meetings with senior, teaching and support staff, employers and alumni, and students to discuss the School's ethos and the impact of enhancement initiatives.

4.6 The School has a track record of providing career development advice and support from experts in the banking industry. Initially this was related to the CFA programme and entailed support from a senior investment banker and additional counselling from the Director of Studies, and was designed to enhance students' employment opportunities. The provision has been developed and considerably enhanced over three years. In 2013, a 30 hour, four-day career workshop was developed for all students to attend, and in 2014, the hours allocated were increased to 60 hours in an eight day programme, which also includes ATHE and HNC/D students. In 2016, the career development allocation was increased to 150 hours over four weeks on the Investment Banking Analyst Programme for CFA level 11 students. In 2015, the School established a Career Development Service to

assist both current and former students, and created the full-time post of Relationship Manager to provide assistance in preparing CVs, interview practice, and job placement.

4.7 The School commenced a programme of investment in learning technologies including the development of a virtual learning environment, taking account of student feedback, several years ago. The VLE now enables students to access all teaching materials on and off campus as well as enabling the submission and marking of assignments.

4.8 The School has consistently placed great importance on collecting student feedback to enhance quality and promote continuous improvement. Students' views of teaching and learning are sought through module questionnaires and more informal means of feedback, such as contact with staff in the classroom and meetings with the School's Registrar and members of the Senior Management Team. The feedback is reported to and discussed at programme committees, and the lead course representative also attends the Academic Board.

4.9 The School has effective strategic leadership, a clear set of strategic goals, and is taking demonstrable steps to enhance student learning opportunities. A strong focus on careers advice and support linked to student employability is evident in the provision. The Global Investment and Banking career workshop programme includes sessions on CV review, a mock interview, and the discussion of job strategies. The Valuation Olympiad enables students to engage with Ivy League graduates and develop confidence in their abilities in the investment banking industry. Students and alumni with whom the team met were fulsome in their praise for the careers advice and guidance they received on their programmes, and employer representatives confirmed that the employability focus was an excellent preparation for the world of work. This strong endorsement for the focus on employability and extensive careers support contributed to the recognition of good practice in Expectation B4, paragraph 2.44.

4.10 The School has effectively enhanced student learning opportunities through the development of the VLE and also uses bespoke live, online learning software to enhance accessibility to students. The VLE now gives students full online access to all teaching, learning and assessment materials and resources including assessment packs with assignments, an online library, and School meeting minutes. The VLE is also used for the submission of all work for assessment, linked to plagiarism-detection software. Students confirm that it is well organised and useful.

4.11 The enhancement initiatives have been effectively instigated and steered at senior management level. However, the mechanisms within the School for the identification and sharing of good practice do not readily lend themselves to a bottom-up approach to identifying opportunities for enhancement. Within the terms of reference of committees, the role of dissemination of good practice and enhancement of student learning opportunities is confined to the Academic Board. There is no stated role for the new Learning and Teaching Committee and Programme Committees in these matters. However, the review team were told that the dissemination of good practice takes place at programme committees and assessment standardisation meetings. This apparent discrepancy contributed to the recommendation in Expectation B8, paragraph 2.86, that the School ensures that the operation of committees reflects their terms of reference.

4.12 Furthermore, not all members of a programme team attend programme committees, and minutes do not show discussion of enhancement. This missed opportunity to identify, support and disseminate good practice contributed to the recommendation in Expectation B3, paragraph 2.29, to develop the arrangements for the identification and sharing of good practice across all teaching staff.

4.13 The School does not have a written enhancement strategy and many staff with whom the review team met had difficulty explaining the strategy and their understanding of the term 'enhancement'. There was, however, a clear understanding among staff and alumni that the main focus of the Learning and Teaching Strategy is on developing students' employability skills and establishing a strong connection with the banking and finance industry to assist students in gaining employment. The review team therefore **recommends** that the School should fully articulate its approach to the enhancement of student learning opportunities.

4.14 Overall the team concludes that the School has a strategic approach to the enhancement of student learning opportunities and has a strong ethos which encourages employability. However, committee processes do not readily lend themselves to the identification and sharing of good practice among teaching staff and the School's approach to enhancement could be articulated more clearly. Therefore, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is moderate because of weaknesses in the operation of part of the School's governance structure.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

4.15 In reaching its judgement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook. There are no affirmations in this area, but the review team identified one recommendation, with links to two other recommendations and one feature of good practice within the Quality of Student Learning Opportunities.

4.16 The School has a strategic approach to enhancement through its focus on employability. However, the team recommended that this approach and its link to enhancement could be articulated more fully. The team also made a link to Expectation B3 in acknowledging the need for the development of arrangements for the identification and sharing of good practice across all teaching staff. In Expectation B8, the team recommends that the operation of committees should reflect their terms of reference and that meeting records aid effective institutional oversight and monitoring of the provision and this was also linked to the enhancement of student learning opportunities.

4.17 In addition to the recommendations in this area, the review team highlighted the positive contribution made by the School's work on career and employability initiatives which enables students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential. This employability focus has received positive feedback from students and alumni and was acknowledged through the link to the good practice in Expectation B4.

4.18 The School is committed to collecting feedback from students in striving for continuous improvement and student representatives are involved with the committees. The School has taken deliberate steps in the design of its VLE and online facilities to enable students to access lectures when they are not able to attend in person.

4.19 The review team concludes that the Expectation is met but the level of risk is moderate because of weaknesses in the operation of part of the School's governance structure. Overall, the School does take a strategic approach to improve the quality of its learning opportunities and therefore the enhancement of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

Glossary

This glossary is a quick-reference guide to terms in this report that may be unfamiliar to some readers. Definitions of key operational terms are also given on pages 21-24 of the [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\) handbook](#).

If you require formal definitions of other terms please refer to the section on assuring standards and quality: www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality.

User-friendly explanations of a wide range of terms can be found in the longer **Glossary** on the QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/Pages/GlossaryEN.aspx.

Academic standards

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

Award

A qualification, or academic credit, conferred in formal recognition that a student has achieved the intended **learning outcomes** and passed the assessments required to meet the academic standards set for a **programme** or unit of study.

Awarding organisation

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

Blended learning

Learning delivered by a number of different methods, usually including face-to-face and e-learning (see **technology enhanced or enabled learning**).

Credit(s)

A means of quantifying and recognising learning, used by most institutions that provide higher education **programmes of study**, expressed as numbers of credits at a specific level.

Degree-awarding body

A UK higher education provider (typically a university) with the power to award degrees, conferred by Royal Charter, or under Section 76 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, or under Section 48 of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992, or by Papal Bull, or, since 1999, granted by the Privy Council on advice from QAA (in response to applications for taught degree awarding powers, research degree awarding powers or university title).

Distance learning

A course of study that does not involve face-to-face contact between students and tutors but instead uses technology such as the internet, intranets, broadcast media, CD-ROM and video, or traditional methods of correspondence - learning 'at a distance'.

See also **blended learning**.

Dual award or double award

The granting of separate awards (and certificates) for the same **programme** by two **degree-awarding bodies** who have jointly delivered the programme of study leading to them. See also **multiple award**.

e-learning

See technology enhanced or enabled learning

Enhancement

The process by which higher education providers systematically improve the quality of provision and the ways in which students' learning is supported. It is used as a technical term in our review processes.

Expectations

Statements in the **Quality Code** that set out what all UK higher education providers expect of themselves and each other, and what the general public can therefore expect of them.

Flexible and distributed learning

A programme or module that does not require the student to attend classes or events at particular times and locations.

See also **distance learning**.

Framework

A published formal structure. See also **framework for higher education qualifications**.

Framework for higher education qualifications

A published formal structure that identifies a hierarchy of national qualification levels and describes the general achievement expected of holders of the main qualification types at each level, thus assisting higher education providers in maintaining academic standards. QAA publishes the following frameworks: *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and *The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland* (FHEQIS).

Good practice

A process or way of working that, in the view of a QAA review team, makes a particularly positive contribution to a higher education provider's management of academic standards and the quality of its educational provision. It is used as a technical term in QAA's audit and review processes.

Learning opportunities

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

Learning outcomes

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

Multiple awards

An arrangement where three or more **degree-awarding bodies** together provide a single jointly delivered **programme** (or programmes) leading to a separate **award** (and separate certification) of each awarding body. The arrangement is the same as for **dual/double awards**, but with three or more awarding bodies being involved.

Operational definition

A formal definition of a term, establishing exactly what QAA means when using it in reviews and reports.

Programme (of study)

An approved course of study that provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads to a qualification.

Programme specifications

Published statements about the intended **learning outcomes** of programmes of study, containing information about teaching and learning methods, support and assessment methods, and how individual units relate to levels of achievement.

Quality Code

Short term for the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which is the UK-wide set of **reference points** for higher education providers (agreed through consultation with the higher education community, and published by QAA), which states the **Expectations** that all providers are required to meet.

Reference points

Statements and other publications that establish criteria against which performance can be measured.

Self-evaluation document

A report submitted by a higher education provider, assessing its own performance, to be used as evidence in a QAA review.

Subject Benchmark Statement

A published statement that sets out what knowledge, understanding, abilities and skills are expected of those graduating in each of the main subject areas (mostly applying to bachelor's degrees), and explains what gives that particular discipline its coherence and identity.

Technology enhanced or enabled learning (or e-learning)

Learning that is delivered or supported through the use of technology.

Threshold academic standard

The minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for an academic **award**. Threshold academic standards are set out in the national **frameworks** and **Subject Benchmark Statements**.

Virtual learning environment (VLE)

An intranet or password-only interactive website (also referred to as a platform or user interface) giving access to **learning opportunities** electronically. These might include such resources as course handbooks, information and reading lists; blogs, message boards and forums; recorded lectures; and/or facilities for online seminars (webinars).

Widening participation

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

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