QAA

Goldsmith International Business School

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

November 2012

Key findings about Goldsmith International Business School

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in May 2012, the QAA review team (the team) considers that there can be **confidence** in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of the Chartered Management Institute, the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants with Oxford Brookes University, the Institute of Administrative Management, The Chartered Institute for IT, and the Management Development Partnership with Manchester Metropolitan University.

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

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

Good practice

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

- the process by which academic staff use reflection, feedback, peer review and observations to enhance teaching and learning (paragraph 2.8)
- enrichment activities that provide a professional perspective that adds to the depth and breadth of students' theoretical knowledge (paragraph 2.9).

Recommendations

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

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

- review the committee structure to clearly differentiate roles and responsibilities in order to maintain and enhance quality assurance (paragraph 1.3)
- develop and implement an internal plagiarism policy, and appeals and complaints procedures that expand on the awarding organisations' policies (paragraph 1.4)
- improve collection, knowledge and understanding of retention and achievement data (paragraph 1.9)
- take action to address and improve learner achievement levels (paragraph 1.9)
- undertake course annual reports with greater rigour and closely monitor ensuing actions and their impact (paragraph 1.10)
- further develop continuing professional development activities for staff that relate to the use of external reference points (paragraph 2.4).

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

- continue to develop integration of quality processes with relevant external reference points (paragraph 2.5)
- continue to facilitate representation of the student voice on appropriate committees (paragraph 2.12)

- review the provision of learning resources to facilitate access to electronic academic sources appropriate to the level of study (paragraph 2.19)
- keep course information on the website under regular review (paragraph 3.3)
- implement and monitor the effectiveness of the responsibilities checklist (paragraph 3.7).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the Review for Educational Oversight[1] (REO) conducted by QAA at Goldsmith International Business School (the provider; the School). The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the provider discharges its stated responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes of study that the provider delivers on behalf of the Chartered Management Institute (CMI); the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) with Oxford Brookes University; the Institute of Administrative Management (IAM); The Chartered Institute for IT (CIT); and the Management Development Partnership (MDP) with Manchester Metropolitan University. The review was carried out in May and November 2012 by Ms Patricia Millner, Mr Hayiath Qureshi, Mr Brian Sullivan, Ms Ann Kettle, Mr Mike Slawin (reviewers), and Professor Patricia Higham and Dr Richard Wheeler (coordinators).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the *Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook*.[2] Evidence in support of the review included documentation supplied by the School and its awarding organisations, including the School's strategic plan, partnership agreements, organisational structure, quality assurance, policies and procedures, programme review reports, programme handbooks, progression arrangements, samples of students' work, publicity materials, and meetings with staff and students.

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

- awarding organisations' policies and award programme specifications
- the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF).

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

Goldsmith IBS Limited trading as Goldsmith International Business School (the School) is located in South East London. Its mission is to deliver world-class learning to individuals, within an inclusive, supportive and diverse learning community. In 2005, the British Accreditation Council accredited the School, and the Department for Education and Skills included the School on its Register of Learning Providers. Since its founding, the School has grown steadily and expanded away from primary vocation and further education courses by becoming a provider of higher education business, management, accounting, and IT courses for several awarding organisations.

The School is an ACCA Gold Standard Approved Learning Partner. In March 2012, the School had 476 enrolled students, of which nearly 97.3 per cent were full-time international students, 20 staff, comprised of 11 academic staff members (equivalent to eight full-time equivalent staff), and nine support and administrative staff. In November 2012, the School had 406 enrolled students, of whom about 98 per cent were full-time international students, 20 staff, comprised of 11 academic staff members (equivalent to eight full-time equivalent staff), and support and administrative staff.

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[1] www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/tier-4
[2] www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/reo-handbook.aspx

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

Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) with Oxford Brookes University
- ACCA Diploma: Papers F1-F3 plus Foundations in Professionalism
- ACCA Advanced Diploma: Papers F1-F9 plus Foundations in Professionalism
- BSc (Hons) in Applied Accounting (level 6) (112)
- ACCA Professional Diploma: Papers P1-P7 (3)

The Chartered Institute for IT (CIT)
- Certificate in Information Technology (level 4) (21)

Chartered Management Institute (CMI)
- Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership (level 7) (19)

Institute of Administrative Management (IAM)
- Diploma in Administrative Management (level 4) (121)
- Advanced Diploma in Administrative Management (level 5) (124)

Management Development Partnership (MDP) with Manchester Metropolitan University
- BSc (Hons) Management and Business Administration (top-up degree) (6)

The provider's stated responsibilities

The School is responsible for teaching and learning in relation to awarding organisations' qualifications, local marketing and promotion of all its approved qualifications, the admission of students, student support, and ensuring that students can submit complaints and appeals in accordance with the regulations of the awarding organisations. The awarding organisations, with the exception of CMI, are responsible for assessing the students and external verification. The School is responsible for developing CMI assessments, for internal marking and internal verification in accordance with the awarding organisation's regulations.

Recent developments

The School recently introduced business risk assessment, a biometric attendance system, CCTV, and plans to diversify into part-time, weekend and evening modes of study, the employer-sponsored training market, and possibly enter the international training arena with particular focus on Africa and the Caribbean. The School will require that staff become fully trained teachers, and will offer support. Recently, the School appointed former students who had completed their degree course as lecturers, administrators, a Quality Officer, and a Student Welfare Officer.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on higher education programmes at the provider were invited to present a submission to the review team. The recently established Student Representative Committee developed and submitted a written submission, which drew on the minutes of their meeting, a review of two formal students' feedback/surveys undertaken by the Quality Assurance Officer, a focus group discussion by committee members, and a questionnaire followed up by meetings with students to gather additional feedback on a range of questions. The findings were compiled with support from the School's staff and management. The key

matters include general satisfaction with course timetabling, the desire to access published information about the School, teaching and learning, resources, students' experiences as learners and the support they receive. The coordinators met students at the preparatory meeting and the team met students during the review visits. The written submission and the meetings with students provided helpful and informative information.

Detailed findings about Goldsmith International Business School

1   Academic standards

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

1.1   The School manages academic standards satisfactorily. Responsibility for academic standards lies with four awarding organisations: ACCA, CMI, IAM and CIT. MDP in partnership with Manchester Metropolitan University, is responsible for a BSc (Hons) in Business Management, which is a progression route from IAM courses. The School is responsible for staff development, student support and induction, assignment feedback, tutorials, guidance, provision of learning resources and gathering student opinion for all courses. CMI's
accreditation agreement gives the School responsibility for providing all aspects of assessment internally. The CMI's review and reporting arrangements secure course quality.

1.2   The School's Quality Assurance Committee and Administrative Committee procedures for monitoring standards and quality do not identify and monitor areas for development. The Academic Quality Committee delegates responsibility for academic policy-making, oversight of programmes, and academic development to the School's Executive Management Team, which includes the Principal and Head of Operations, who are responsible for running the School within the Executive Management Team's parameters.

1.3   Terms of reference indicate overlap in membership and responsibilities between the Academic Quality Committee and the Quality Assurance Committee. As the School has relatively few staff, the Executive Management Team brought the committees together into a Joint Committee to prepare for the review. The committees' minutes are sparse and do not clearly demonstrate an embedded quality management and quality assurance cycle that can address retention, achievement and progression satisfactorily. The committees' roles and responsibilities in addressing these outcomes are not clear. It is advisable for the School to review committee structures to differentiate more clearly roles and responsibilities.

1.4   Awarding organisations' academic regulations include clearly set out assessment, appeals and complaints procedures that staff and students access through handbooks. The School uses the plagiarism guidelines of the awarding organisations. However, these are mentioned only briefly in the CMI Handbook, in institutional regulations in the School Student Handbook, and in course information sheets, and plagiarism is not explained or defined fully. The School has its own appeals and complaints procedures for CMI, independent of the other awarding organisations. It is advisable for the School to develop and implement an internal plagiarism policy, and appeals and complaints procedures that expand on the awarding organisation policies.

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

1.5   The Quality Assurance Committee is responsible for assuring that the School uses external reference points and for assessing the maintenance and security of academic standards. The awarding organisations accredit all programmes between QCF levels 4 to 7. The School engages proactively with ACCA to set and maintain high standards.

1.6   The School uses external reference points satisfactorily to engage with its awarding

organisations and develop relevant progression routes. The level 7 Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership accredited and externally reviewed by CMI provides access to several UK top-up MBA and Master's in Business Management degrees. Successful completion of ACCA papers F1 to F9 and submission of a dissertation lead to the award of a BSc (Hons) degree in Applied Accounting by Oxford Brookes University.

1.7   Staff development activity relating to academic standards is not systematic, but does include staff members who engage with the awarding organisations by attending seminars and workshops about the management of academic standards. The Head of Operations, who has participated in Mentor Development Workshops at Oxford Brookes University, undertakes in-house supervision of students' dissertations.

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

1.8   Students understand assessment criteria, are generally satisfied with the timeliness and quality of assessment feedback, and are familiar with complaints and appeals procedures of the awarding organisations. The CMI's Handbook contains extensive guidance on regulations governing assessment and re-assessment, external examiner roles and boards of examiners' membership and conduct. External verifiers moderate representative samples of assessed work. The CMI-taught postgraduate assignments are initially marked internally and externally moderated by CMI.

1.9   Data is not used effectively to monitor retention, achievement and progression. The School receives external verifier reports, but it is not clear how it uses these along with internal verifier reports to address retention, achievement and progression levels. The School's Academic Quality Committee does not organise outcome data of externally examined qualifications effectively into cohorts to understand and then address the pass and retention rates. It is advisable for the School to improve collection, knowledge and understanding of retention and achievement data and also to take action to analyse, address and improve learner achievement levels.

1.10   The School lacks a rigorous process for evaluating the effectiveness of annual monitoring of provision, including reflection on external verifier reports and student feedback, to ensure standards across all courses. Although the CMI's external verifier report indicates satisfaction with academic standards, there was no evidence of staff's reflection on the report contents. The Executive Management Team, the Academic Quality Committee and the Quality Assurance Committee do not consider the external verifier's comments sufficiently, and do not respond in writing to the verifier report. Student representatives do not sit on the Academic Quality or Quality Assurance Committees and lack opportunities to comment on reports. The School would benefit from engaging with student feedback more purposefully to assist with managing academic standards. It is advisable for the School to undertake annual course reports with greater rigour and closely monitor ensuing actions and their impact.

1.11   The School uses a number of relevant indicators to measure the quality of academic standards. The awarding organisations set and mark external examinations for the ACCA, IAM and CIT courses. The School uses peer observations, questionnaires, and end-of-year student feedback to monitor standards of delivery and to identify areas for improvement.

1.12   It is not clear how the School consistently manages improvements. Committee processes do not fully and formally use the existing quality assurance processes, including awarding organisation feedback and identification, and sharing of both internal and external good practice.

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

2   Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1   The School's management structures and procedures operate satisfactorily to maintain the quality of learning opportunities. The Head of Operations acknowledges that newly developed processes and procedures will become embedded, consolidated and enhanced as the School works through a complete quality assurance cycle.

2.2   The Principal and Head of Operations are responsible for overall quality assurance of provision. The School has increased appropriately its non-academic staff to undertake roles such as Quality Assurance Officer and Student Welfare Officer. Three interlocking committees (Academic Quality, Administrative, and Quality Assurance Committees) are responsible for managing quality of learning opportunities and standards. The Quality Assurance Officer reviews planned quality activities. However, committee roles and responsibilities overlap and are not clear.

2.3   A three-pronged student-centred approach to ensure and enhance quality of learning opportunities includes student attendance monitoring, student feedback and feedforward, and student performance monitoring. These processes and the comprehensive, appropriate Course Annual Report template have the potential to review thoroughly the quality of learning opportunities. However, reports seen by the team were deficient in depth and detail and therefore lacked impact.

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

2.4   The School uses relevant external reference points, but these need further integration with quality processes. The Executive Management Team is highly aware of the Academic Infrastructure in relation to the quality of learning outcomes. The School adapted quality processes and developed policies to take cognisance of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code), reflected in the School's Quality Assurance Policy, Quality Assurance Manual, Student Admission Policy and Assessment Policy. Teaching and administrative staff are less aware of the Academic Infrastructure. The School's Staff Development Policy aims to develop excellence in teaching and learning, but does not mention external reference points. It is advisable for the School to further develop continuing professional development activities for staff that relate to the use of external reference points.

2.5   Other School policies align with the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* precepts: the Disability Statement, Equality and Diversity Policy, Code of Ethics, Student Support and Guidance Policy, Fair Assessment Statement, and the awarding organisations' Appeals and Complaints Procedure. It is desirable for the School to continue develop integration of quality processes with relevant external reference points.

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

2.6   The School uses effective measures to assure teaching and learning quality. Staff are well qualified, with most having postgraduate qualifications and professional experience, and some currently studying for doctorate degrees. The School employs previous graduates as contract staff, based on their qualifications, passion, and enthusiasm for teaching and supporting students. The School supports tutors to gain teaching qualifications.

2.7   The Staff Manual and Tutor Agreement for teaching clearly lays out expectations of tutors. The School adopts a thorough approach to schemes of work, lesson planning and provision of prepared lesson resources, including powerpoint presentations and question banks. These successfully set guidelines and monitor teaching quality.

2.8   The School uses effective processes to monitor teaching and learning. Students are positive about the teaching. Lecturer reflection templates, combined with student feedback, comprise an innovative method that enables tutors to compare their perceptions with those of students, and adjust teaching accordingly early in the module delivery. This process, combined with peer review and managerial observations, successfully enhances teaching and learning and is good practice.

2.9   The Student Liaison Officer organises enrichment activities that supplement classroom teaching, including visits to business fairs and talks by industrialists. Students value these activities, which provide professional perspectives that add to their theoretical knowledge. This is good practice.

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

2.10   The School operates strategies and activities to ensure students are supported effectively. At induction, students receive a comprehensive enrolment pack and Student Handbook, which provide essential information, explain teaching, learning and assessment arrangements, and attendance regulations. The School provides a useful guide to citing and referencing for its students, which sets out reasons for referencing.

2.11   The School's Student Support and Guidance Policy provides information on activities that students can expect. Language development classes are available. Study skills sessions are arranged informally, if requested. Students are encouraged to have individual learning plans. Most students have engaged with this process, which could provide a useful vehicle for managing their learning. Students reported that they felt well supported by staff, whom they could contact easily. Tutor support, while available and provided, is informal and not recorded.

2.12   The School obtains student feedback through two student questionnaires that focus mainly on teaching. The second questionnaire seeks feedback on classroom, library and computing facilities, but no information is sought about students' induction experiences. A Student Representative Committee is newly formed (September 2011) to produce the student submission, but students are not yet represented on relevant management committees. It is desirable for the School to continue facilitate representation of the student voice on appropriate committees.

2.13   Students are generally satisfied with the verbal and written feedback they received. Students receive full and constructive written feedback for each learning outcome of the internally assessed CMI qualification. Feedback includes assessors' comments and internal

verifier statements. Mock examinations, information on examiners' comments, model answers, and use of past papers prepare students for examined qualifications.

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

2.14   The School has appropriate policies and procedures for identifying and supporting continuous professional development. The Staff Development Policy sets out a commitment to provide appropriate resources to support development which is consistent with organisational needs. The Principal and Head of Operations carry out effective induction processes and probationary reviews that inform and monitor new staff's knowledge and performance in supporting students' learning. Following appraisal, staff develop personal development plans, which identify development needs and set objectives to be achieved, including further training.

2.15   All teaching staff, apart from the Principal and Head of Operations, are employed on fixed-term contracts. Individuals are responsible for their own professional development. The School facilitated staff to undertake postgraduate qualifications by providing interest-free loans. The School also contributed 50 per cent of the cost for five staff taking the Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector qualification.

2.16   Senior staff members encourage teaching staff to take up development opportunities, but the School does not hold a central record of staff development activities that have been undertaken. Staff members attend awarding organisation events and report back to the staff team at an in-house event. The Head of Operations has undertaken training for supervision of dissertations provided by the awarding university. Another member of staff delivers academic papers at international and national conferences. Much good practice is shared informally within the small staff base. A peer review process provides a more structured opportunity for staff from different subject areas to observe each other's teaching, and discuss methodologies and student engagement.

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

2.17   The School tries to ensure that appropriate resources are available and accessible to students to enable them to achieve their learning outcomes. Currently, these arrangements are adequate. The School employs sufficient appropriately qualified teaching staff to cover the range of curriculum areas and student numbers. Nine non-academic staff, including a Quality Assurance Officer and two staff who specifically engage in student welfare, provide administrative and student support.

2.18   Student questionnaires report a limited computing facility and some problem with wireless internet connections. Students also mention a limited range and number of books available in the library.

2.19   The School does not use a virtual learning environment, but supplies students with texts, revision kits, and copies of powerpoint slides. Links to multimedia sites and information encourage students' broader reading and research. The School makes the awarding organisations' recommended reading and resource lists available to students. Students would like to receive these learning resources, which are included in their fees, at an earlier point. The School's intent to supply accounts for e-books, e-journals and 'revolutionary learning tools' is aspirational. It is desirable for the School to review the provision of learning resources to facilitate access to electronic academic sources

appropriate to the level of study. Encouragement to teaching staff to reflect on student evaluations through a structured format may be considered good practice if used, and examples of its effectiveness can be given - even better if staff use these for peer discussion and/or dissemination of good practice.

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

3   Public information

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

3.1   The School is effective in providing public information, primarily through its website, which is the definitive source of information. Information available on the website is supplemented by printed material, such as a student handbook, and by two social network pages. Email, text messaging and noticeboards are also used as a regular means of communicating with students. Students are satisfied with the accuracy, completeness and usefulness of information provided by the School.

3.2   The website is clearly laid out and easy to navigate. There are sections which contain downloadable information for current students, including useful guidance for international students on living and studying in London. A collection of free resources contains lecture notes and examination questions produced by School staff to demonstrate to prospective students the range of resources available. It is intended to develop this resource to support flexible and distance learning.

3.3   Within a 'Courses' section on the website, course sheets provide information in a standardised format for prospective students on the awards offered by the School. The information, which is submitted to the awarding organisations for approval, includes the level and duration of the course, entrance and English language requirements, course components and assessment arrangements, and progression opportunities. A tuition fee for home and international students is given for individual courses, with details of what is included and what is excluded, such as resit examination fees. Given the variety and number of programmes of study, some of which have not yet recruited students, it is desirable for the School to keep this section of its website under regular review to ensure that the information on the course sheets continues to be accurate and up to date.

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

3.4   The School recognises the importance of checking the accuracy and completeness of public information and has recently implemented a comprehensive range of policies and procedures to assure this. These include public information guidelines and a public information responsibility checklist. The policies and procedures are explained and supported by templates in a framework, which seeks to ensure that all information is current, complete, and accurate.

3.5   The responsibility for checking and agreeing alterations to public information is clear and resides with the Principal and the Head of Operations. This is confirmed in the Quality Assurance Manual. Although the framework has only been in operation since May 2012,

completed templates show that the process is functioning, well understood, and beginning to be established.

3.6 The process of checking the accuracy of printed and electronic information is adequate and well understood by staff. Following initiation, the process is agreed, the content is checked, and is then submitted to the Executive Management Team for agreement. The minutes of the Executive Management Team from September 2012 indicate that discussions concerning the accuracy of public information are taking place. It is clear that, as well as agreeing changes, new initiatives relating to the accuracy of public information are being implemented.

3.7 Responsibilities for the checking of the accuracy of public information policies and procedures are identified in a new public information responsibility document. Although this has not yet been fully implemented, it makes clear the type of public information requiring review, who has oversight responsibility for the review, and a considered frequency for the checks. It is desirable for the School to implement and monitor the effectiveness of the responsibilities checklist.

3.8 Students are consulted frequently and effectively on aspects of information intended for the student body. It was confirmed that their opinions are valued and listened to, and that changes are made as a result. They cited the example of the extension of the social network page to incorporate a UNICEF initiative, where students led on a charity fundraising event.

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

Action plan[3]

Goldsmith International Business School action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight November 2012						
Good practice	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
The review team identified the following areas of **good practice** that are worthy of wider dissemination within the provider:						
• the process by which academic staff use reflection, feedback, peer review and observations to enhance teaching and learning (paragraph 2.8)	Continue to monitor and enhance this good practice, using feedback from teaching observations that feed into our continuous professional development process to emphasise the relevance of reflective assessment and feedback as part of a feedforward process	30 June 2013	Head of Operations (to cascade to all tutors with input by Quality Assurance Officer)	Improved student performance in examinations and other assessments Improved student and staff satisfaction	Academic Quality Committee	Periodic review of staff appraisals
• enrichment activities that	To continue to identify and	30 June 2013	Head of Operations	Improved student	Academic Quality	Academic Quality Committee review of

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

provide a professional perspective that adds to the depth and breadth of students' theoretical knowledge (paragraph 2.9).	publicise value-adding events that enrich and enlarge learners' professional perspectives and enhance their employability		(supported by Student Liaison Officer)	feedback participation Better student attendance and performance at examinations Students gain wider perspective of their chosen career path	Committee	student retention, attendance, performance, employment and student participation at such events
Advisable	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
The team considers that it is **advisable** for the provider to:						
• review the committee structure to clearly differentiate roles and responsibilities in order to maintain and enhance quality assurance (paragraph 1.3)	To streamline and clarify reporting structure between committees	30 June 2013	Principal (supported by the Head of Operations)	Clearer committee terms of reference Improved retention, achievement and progression data Committee minutes reflect actions to improve quality Increased student representation	Executive Management Team and each committee	Reduced role overlap and enhanced effectiveness of each committee objectives

				at committees		
• develop and implement an internal plagiarism policy, and appeals and complaints procedures that expand on the awarding organisations' policies (paragraph 1.4)	Refer to *Chapter B4: Student support, learning resources and careers education, information, advice and guidance, Chapter B6: Assessment of students and accreditation of prior learning* and *Chapter B9: Complaints and appeals* of the Quality Code to enlighten and support learners	30 June 2013	Academic Quality Committee	Development and adoption of an internal plagiarism policy Increased student awareness of plagiarism to be obtained from student feedback	Academic Quality Committee and Administration Committee	Reduced incidences of plagiarism during assessment and external verification
• improve collection, knowledge and understanding of retention and achievement data (paragraph 1.9)	Develop a structured process for collecting and monitoring retention, achievement and progression that aligns with *Chapter B10: Managing higher education provision with others* of the Quality Code	30 June 2013	Head of Operations (supported by the Principal and Quality Assurance Officer)	Clearer committee terms of reference Improved retention, achievement and progression data Academic Quality Committee minutes address issues that reflect response	Executive Management Team and each committee	Periodic review of retention, achievement and progression data at committee level Improved rate of retention from quality assurance analysis Better achievement rate from review of student and staff feedback and annual reports

				to external reports on quality		
• take action to address and improve learner achievement levels (paragraph 1.9)	Introduce structured group induction, provide better pastoral support and learning resources in line with *Chapter B4: Student support, learning resources and careers education, information, advice and guidance* of the Quality Code	30 June 2013	Head of Operations (supported by the Quality Assurance Officer)	Improved performance Positive feedback from staff and students	Executive Management Team and Academic Committee	Biannual review of achievements at committee level Overall improvement of progression rates
• undertake course annual reports with greater rigour and closely monitor ensuing actions and their impact (paragraph 1.10)	The Academic Quality Committee will review external examiner reports and action recommendations Actions will be monitored by the Academic Quality Committee Undertake mock course annual reports biannually	31 August 2013	Head of Operations (supported by Quality Assurance Officer)	Improvements in external examiner comments Improvements from mock sessions and staff feedback Favourable students' feedback and committee reviews	Academic Quality Committee	Lesser issues in external examiner report Favourable mock results Improved students' responses Positive committee reviews
• further develop continuing	Plan staff development	30 July 2013	Head of Operations	Alignment of staff	Administration Committee	Positive biannual staff appraisals

Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
professional development activities for staff that relate to the use of external reference points (paragraph 2.4).	activities into each semester plan and staff appraisal and review outcomes biannually external reference points in relation to staff continuous professional development activities		(supported by all committees)	development activities to external reference points Improved student performance at examinations and assessments	(supported by Head of Operations) Quality Assurance Committee	Improved student feedback on staff performance
The team considers that it is **desirable** for the provider to:						
• continue to develop integration of quality processes with relevant external reference points (paragraph 2.5)	Continue to develop our policies and processes, ensuring they align with the Quality Code	30 August 2013	Principal (supported by the Head of Operations)	Clearer committee terms of reference Committee minutes to reflect actions aligned with relevant external reference points	Executive Management Team and each committee	Improved positive students' feedback More effective development and deployment of policies and procedures
• continue to facilitate representation of the student voice on appropriate	Involve students in each committee meeting to project their views and voice	30 August 2013	Head of Operations (supported by the Quality Assurance Officer)	Minutes of all committee meetings	Principal	Increased student representation at committee meetings

committees (paragraph 2.12)	Continue to facilitate student voice on appropriate committees					
• review the provision of learning resources to facilitate access to electronic academic sources appropriate to the level of study (paragraph 2.19)	Staff meetings before development of lesson plans will help to identify the best learning resources to achieve our objectives Quality Assurance Officer to review students' feedback on suitability of learning resources	30 August 2013	Head of Operations and Quality Assurance Officer	Enhance academic quality assurance terms of reference on suitability and adequacy of each level of learning resources	All committees	Improved student feedback on learning resources issue Improved student performance at assessments/examinations
• keep course information on the website under regular review (paragraph 3.3)	The Academic Quality Committee to review all learning resources and public information on website biannually	30 August 2013	Head of Operations	Minutes of committee minutes reflecting currency of course information and no exceptions	All committees	Committee minutes with no exceptions Improved students' feedback No complaints about information on website
• implement and monitor the effectiveness of the responsibilities checklist (paragraph 3.7).	The Quality Assurance Committee to check as part of public information procedures	30 August 2013	Head of Operations and Quality Assurance Officer	Appropriate responsibility mapped to activity in the checklist	All committees	All committee minutes contain no exceptions

About QAA

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

QAA's aims are to:

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

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

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

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

Glossary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

framework for higher education qualifications A published formal structure that identifies a hierarchy of national qualification levels and describes the general achievement expected of holders of the main qualification types at each level, thus assisting higher education providers in maintaining academic standards. QAA publishes the following frameworks:

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

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

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

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

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

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

programme (of study) An approved course of study which provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads to a qualification.

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

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

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

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

quality See **academic quality**.

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

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

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