Higher Education Review of Hull College

May 2016

Contents

About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Hull College. The review took place from 18 to 19 May 2016 and was conducted by a team of two reviewers, as follows:

- Mrs Patricia Millner
- Mr Scott Thomas (student reviewer).

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provided by Hull College 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, 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
- provides a commentary on the selected theme
- makes recommendations
- identifies features of good practice
- affirms action that the provider is taking or plans to take.

The Hull College Group has recently been granted foundation degree awarding powers by the Privy Council following detailed scrutiny of the group's application by QAA which included the setting and maintaining of academic standards and the quality of students' learning opportunities. Consequently this review focused exclusively on the areas of information about higher education provision and the enhancement of student learning opportunities at Hull College.

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 4.

In reviewing Hull College the review team has also considered a theme selected for particular focus across higher education in England and Northern Ireland. The themes for the academic year 2015-16 are Student Employability and Digital Literacy,[2] and the provider is required to select, in consultation with student representatives, one of these themes to be explored through the review process.

The QAA website gives more information about QAA and its mission.[3] A dedicated section explains the method for Higher Education Review[4] and has links to the review handbook and other informative documents. For an explanation of terms see the glossary at the end of this report.

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[1] The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at: www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code.
[2] Higher Education Review themes:
www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2859.
[3] QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us.
[4] Higher Education Review web pages:
www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/how-we-review-higher-education/higher-education-review.

Key findings

QAA's judgements about Hull College

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at Hull College.

- The quality of the information about learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The enhancement of student learning opportunities is **commended**.

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following features of **good practice** at Hull College.

- The comprehensive partnership working with students which enhances the student learning experience (Enhancement).
- The robust higher education quality cycle which enables the identification and implementation of opportunities for enhancement (Enhancement).
- The involvement of staff in research and scholarly activity which contributes to an enhanced student learning environment (Enhancement).
- The range of opportunities, locally and nationally, available to students which increases their employability (Enhancement).

Recommendations

There are no recommendations.

Affirmation of action being taken

The QAA review team **affirms** the following action that Hull College is already taking to make academic standards secure and/or improve the educational provision offered to its students.

- The steps being taken by the College to address specialist staff absences by establishing a pool of approved replacement staff (Enhancement).

Theme: Student Employability

Hull College is strongly focused on the employability of its students. Its mission and higher education strategy set out the clear intention to produce programmes which will ensure that students who study them will encounter current industry practices and experience. The College has contact with over 1,200 employers. Curricula, based on staff, who themselves are often practitioners in the sector, and links with employers, have employability skills and experience integrated into them. Both faculties share the philosophy of entrepreneurship and taking advantage of digital developments. Awarding bodies and external examiners regularly comment on the ways in which preparation for future employability is built into the programmes and is evident from student work

Further explanation of the key findings can be found in the handbook available on the QAA webpage explaining Higher Education Review.

About Hull College

Hull College (the College), trading under the name Hull College Group, is a large mixed economy institution. It consists of three colleges at Hull, Harrogate and Goole, together with HCUK Training. In 2014-15 there were some 27,000 students of whom approximately 1,300 are studying higher education awards at Hull and Harrogate Colleges.

Situated in an area of low education achievement, the mission of the College is 'Innovative and enterprising people enabling excellent learning for employability and social fulfilment'. The higher education strategy is informed by the mission and the six strategic themes which underpin it. A major focus of the whole College is employability and entrepreneurship and overall the institution has working relationships with over 1,200 employers.

There are two higher education faculties: Arts, and Business and Science, which work across both the Hull and Harrogate campuses. Some programmes are offered at one campus and others at both campuses. The Registry and central administration functions are based at Hull.

In 2012-13 the College changed its awarding body to The Open University for the majority of its provision and undertook a validation process for all relevant courses at this time. The Open University allows a good deal of devolved authority to its partners and regards Hull College as an effective partner institution. The University of Huddersfield is the awarding body for the education provision, including postgraduate work. There are also Higher National (HN) awards offered by Pearson. All programmes with other awarding bodies have been phased out.

The Hull College Group underwent foundation degree awarding powers scrutiny after the QAA Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review (IQER) in 2011, and this was granted by the Privy Council in November 2015. As a result, this review only considers information, enhancement and the theme of student employability. The powers have not yet been used.

Since the 2011 IQER there have been a number of changes at senior management level below the level of Chief Executive Officer. Each College has a Principal, two of whom came into post after the IQER, and there are new group directors for higher education, and quality, standards and student experience. The Group Director for Higher Education is a new post.

The main challenges are those of the external environment in both further and higher education including the maintenance of recruitment levels.

The College has addressed all the recommendations of the IQER report and indications are positive from sources such as external examiners and National Student Survey results in which the scores for academic support in 2015 were 80 per cent for the Faculty of Arts and 88 per cent for the Faculty of Business and Science. The areas of good practice have also been built on. The College proactively engages with students in many areas in order to improve the learning experience.

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

1.1 As a result of the recent granting of foundation degree awarding powers to the College, the current review does not focus on this judgement area.

2 Judgement: The quality of student learning opportunities

2.1 As a result of the recent granting of foundation degree awarding powers to the College, the current review does not focus on this judgement area.

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   All published information is subject to the Published Information Policy. This applies to all information in the public domain which the College defines as pre-enrolment information, programme specifications, course and module handbooks, course and other marketing information, including the printed prospectus and web-based information. The policy is backed up by a set of procedures to be operated by staff for these forms of information.

3.2   From the evidence seen by the review team including evidence from the self-evaluation document, submitted as part of this review, the student submission, and documentary evidence including policies and procedures, the policy and procedures allow the Expectation to be met.

3.3   The review team examined the effectiveness of the policies and procedures in place for information by examining documentation including the policies for oversight, reviewing the website and virtual learning environment (VLE), welcome packs and the prospectus. The team also held meetings with staff and students, and saw two VLE demonstrations.

3.4   The College produces a range of information about the provision of higher education, ranging from the prospectus through to course handbooks and the provision of materials on the VLE. Printed materials are subject to the stringent processes set out in the policy in order to ensure their accuracy and completeness. The provision of information available to students has been described as a strength in external examiners' reports. The College makes widespread use of student feedback to inform any changes to information, with notable changes resulting from this including revision of the location of certain information. The College is undertaking an audit of information to check its relevance and accuracy. Information is provided from application through to graduation with graduates receiving an official transcript. However, this will change to a Diploma Supplement, which complies with the validating agreements the College has with its awarding bodies, and the Bologna Agreement.

3.5   The review team found that the policies and procedures in place to ensure that information about higher education provision is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy work effectively in practice. Meetings with College staff demonstrated that they are clear about the processes for creating information and their individual roles in the procedures. At each level, course and management, those who produce information understand what parts of the information are their responsibility and how to ensure appropriate sign off for this information. Most information relating to courses is produced at a course level, as much of this is then included in course handbooks which follow a standard template, with customised sections for each course. This course level information is reviewed at the beginning of the academic year by course teams to ensure that it is accurate. The College uses periodic review to check the clarity of information in module handbooks and this is reinforced by comments from external examiners referenced throughout their reports on courses.

3.6   Student feedback is actively sought by the College to improve existing information. The policy of working in partnership with students is providing greater clarity for staff on the kinds of information that potential and actual students would like to see additional suggestions for improvement emerge from the quality cycle.

3.7   For the production of information at the top level, which includes the prospectus, information is collated by marketing and goes through their internal approval processes before being handed to management for final approval. The mechanisms in place enable a clear sign-off process to be followed and ensures that the information produced is fit for purpose and accurate. Where relevant, awarding bodies are sent material to approve after the College process.

3.8   The College produces a significant amount of information for applicants and new entrants, such as the welcome packs and the prospectus. Students identified that they would have liked more information about the course between application and enrolment. As a result an electronic resource for applicants who have been offered a place is currently being piloted with one course, the FdA Criminology. This resource contains more specific course information to help potential students in their advance planning. Following a review of the pilot, the intention is to expand this to all programmes. The move to online provision will, according to the College, ensure information is accurate and up to date, removing the problem of ensuring that printed materials are accurate at the time of printing.

3.9   There is increasing recognition that the future of effective communication with students will be digital. A new College website is scheduled to go live in August 2016. All the steps taken by the College to ensure the accuracy of information is supported by the students who felt it was easy to find information, or knew where to ask should it be difficult to find. As with many aspects of College life, students are also regularly involved in reviewing information such as a course assignment involving assessing how many website clicks it took to locate pieces of information. The Chief Executive also carries out random checks for accuracy on the College's website.

3.10   As a result of the meetings held and the documentation reviewed the review team concludes that the provision of information about higher education provision is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. 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

3.11   On reaching its judgement about the quality of information about learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

3.12   Hull College has increasingly systematised its ways of ensuring the accuracy and currency of its information. This includes online information for the public and potential applicants and internal information for students. There is a robust policy and set of procedures in place, operated by staff who are familiar with their role in the process. Staff are committed to operating it in partnership with students. Students the review team met valued the various sources of information and the opportunities they had to contribute to their ongoing review and development.

3.13   Therefore, the team concludes that the quality of the information about learning opportunities **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 Enhancement is central to the College's approach to its delivery of higher education. At strategic level the College articulates a strong and continued commitment to providing a high quality student experience which is developed through improving student engagement in the design and review of their learning experience. The strategic structure and key themes are comprehensive and clearly set out to demonstrate an integrated framework to support the enhancement of provision. The College's Higher Education Strategy is set within the overall strategic context and mission which aims to 'provide an excellent personalised learning experience'. The Enhancement Strategy, approved by the Academic Board in February 2016, has been mapped to demonstrate how enhancement objectives are embedded in the Higher Education Strategy, and two of its other subsidiaries, Learning and Teaching, and the Research and Scholarship strategies. These have been written to provide an overall set of objectives by which the College focuses the direction of the development of higher education with an emphasis on enhancement in each one.

4.2 A distinct higher education committee structure monitors and reviews the higher education strategies. The committees all have student representatives and report to the HE Academic Board. The intention is that the new Enhancement Strategy will be monitored at three points in the year by the Academic Quality and Standards Committee. The Student Experience Committee and the Learning and Teaching Committee will oversee items relevant to their respective terms of reference.

4.3 The College's higher education quality cycle is a clear and iterative process of continuous improvement. At programme level, annual programme evaluations (APE) are produced for the higher education provision awarded by each university. They gather a wide range of qualitative and quantitative information which is critically evaluated and a programme quality enhancement plan is developed. Within each faculty the APEs are used to produce the faculty Self-Evaluation Reports (SER) and Quality Enhancement Plans (QEPs). An annual overview of higher education is developed at College level from the faculty reports and QEPs and both levels are monitored through the Higher Education Academic Quality and Standards Committee.

4.4 The College's comprehensive set of higher education strategies which embed enhancement and its clear and systematic annual performance evaluations, self-evaluation reporting and quality enhancement plans at all levels which are regularly monitored, would allow the expectation to be met.

4.5 The review team evaluated the effectiveness of the quality enhancement processes by examining student feedback, the management structure and minutes of relevant committees and groups, the higher education quality cycle and strategies, and other documentary evidence. The review team also met students, the Chief Executive, senior staff, the research and scholarship managers, and academic staff, and saw two VLE demonstrations.

4.6 Overall the review team found that the College's strategies and enhancement procedures work well. The Higher Education Enhancement Strategy has an accompanying Implementation Plan 2015-18 which documents the progress made against the five aims. The themes of the current strategy have been drawn each year from the outputs of the

higher education quality cycle and faculty and institutional SERs. The four themes for 2015-16 are: student engagement; information; employability; and digital literacies and technology enhanced learning. The HE Enhancement Strategy and its Implementation Plan have the potential to enhance further the quality provided by the existing higher education strategies, organisation and committee infrastructure and the quality improvement cycle. Its specific impact and effectiveness have yet to be tested and reviewed. However, there is a clear link between the SER process and outputs and the higher education quality cycle, and the existing structures and systems already deliver a culture of continuous improvement which is embedded and operates effectively at all levels of the College.

4.7   The College's responsiveness to stakeholder feedback through the higher education quality cycle leading to improvements in higher education provision is evident in the large number of commendations arising from the revalidations of a substantial portion of Open University programmes and the University of Huddersfield awards 2015-16, external examiner reports, some improved National Student Survey (NSS) outcomes (most notably an 8 per cent increase to 85 per cent in satisfaction for 'Assessment and Feedback') and the high regard for the College of the main awarding body and students. A number of effective strategic actions have been taken to improve the quality of higher education provision including: the appointment of a Group Director of Higher Education; faculty management restructuring to place greater emphasis leadership in support for learning at the point of delivery; and the doubling of the resource, with external funding, for supporting staff scholarship and research. An improved information system to capture and organise student statistics provides prompt, accurate and easily available quantitative data for monitoring higher education metrics on an ongoing basis. Another strategic action to enhance higher education provision is the development of an employment agency to provide a pool of staff to cover during staff absences. Students, external examiners and the foundation degree awarding powers report commented on the difficulties arising from prolonged specialist staff absences. The review team were informed how the establishment of a bank of appropriately qualified staff had been used effectively to cover staff illness. The review team therefore **affirms** the steps taken by the College to address specialist staff absences by establishing a pool of approved replacement staff.

4.8   Good practice in teaching and learning is gathered in various ways: during the annual monitoring process and shared within programmes and at faculty meetings; during peer review and teaching observations; and in-house conferences and staff development sessions. The College's regular review of strategies and policies through the appropriate committees up to Academic Board and Excellence Committee of the Corporation, and the validation of SERs and subsequent monitoring which involves senior managers and students are rigorous processes. They evidence the strategic, integrated approach to enhancement of student learning opportunities which values student opinion. The robust higher education quality cycle which enables the identification and implementation of opportunities for enhancement is **good practice**.

4.9   Student engagement is central to the College's higher education ethos and to enhancement. The approach involves acting on student feedback and emphasises the active involvement of students working in partnership with staff in decision making, learning, scholarship and research. Student representation at formal committee meetings and the strong support for the development of the Students' Union have been incorporated into the suite of higher education strategies over several years. The Enhancement Strategy highlights the place of the Students' Union in taking a key role in the development of the Strategy. This has been strengthened by the recent formation of the role of Senior Student Representative (SSR) in addition to programme representatives. The seven SSRs are drawn from the higher education student body and have a clear job description. Each SSR represents a curriculum area and attends and contributes to one of the five higher education

committees. This ensures greater consistency in the student representation at formal meetings and enables better communication between staff and the student body.

4.10   The College takes many actions to obtain student comment and qualitative information in order to understand student concerns and their views of action taken by the College. The range of opportunities to engage in dialogue and the way that quantitative data is drilled down and analysed to establish the key issues behind the numbers provides evidence for this. For example some disappointing NSS results for learning resources, satisfaction with the Students' Union and overall satisfaction has led to the number of wide ranging actions. Higher Education 'Shout Outs' organised by the Students' Union, meetings between staff and senior staff such as the Director of Innovation and Technology. Specific questionnaires such as the library user survey, the Students' Union higher education student perception survey, and induction survey. NSS outcomes also feed in to the higher education quality reporting and committee structure. Students at Harrogate and at Hull were consulted on the review of the Higher Education Learning and Teaching Strategy. The success of all the College's strategies will be determined by the tangible improvements to the student experience as evidenced by student feedback.

4.11   The intention of partnership working between students and staff extends to the curriculum and learning situations. A key strand of the Enhancement Strategy is about ways to increase student engagement in the design, development and review of their own learning with 'Students as Producers' of learning and enhancement. As examples, 10 students from the Hull and Harrogate campuses played an active part in the Learning and Teaching Conference in February 2016 and students have been involved in the development of new publicity materials. The comprehensive partnership working with students which enhances the entire student experience is **good practice**.

4.12   Staff teaching higher education programmes are expected to maintain their scholarship and research for pedagogical effectiveness and to maintain Recognised Teacher Status. Documents seen by the review team indicate a large amount of staff activity in taking part in conferences, higher level qualifications such as doctorates and master's degrees and Higher Education Academy (HEA) fellowships and senior fellowships. Both faculties have a strategic approach to the development of research and scholarship with their staff base to inform teaching and learning. The Arts Faculty achieved its first externally-funded project (180,000 Euros) in 2014-15. The Business and Science Faculty met the key performance indicator of 95 per cent staff engaged with research and scholarship. The Research Bulletin published in February 2016 showcases high quality staff scholarship, which supports the higher education provision. The impact of staff activity is reflected in student learning and research work which has won regional and national awards, and students have presented on local and national platforms.

4.13   Student participation in the Learning and Teaching Conference in February 2016 reiterated the College's commitment to engaging students as partners in research projects, creating links between teaching, learning and research, and developing a community of learning for staff and students. The embedding of a distinct research and scholarly ethos in the College has been accelerated by the College's successful bid to collaborate in an Association of Colleges and HEA project which has funded a three-year post for an additional Higher Education Research and Scholarship Manager working alongside the College's appointed member of staff. Much work has been achieved in enabling staff to undertake scholarship including practice-based research. This will be further advanced by the provision of small sums of funding which staff can apply for to develop research about the scholarship of learning and teaching (SoLT) which contributes to the curriculum, enhances the student experience and involves students as co-researchers. It is intended that students will contribute papers to the Hull College Research Journal and present posters about their research at the research conference in July 2016. Students' work has

also been put forward to the 2016 AoC research conference. The involvement of staff in research and scholarly activity which contributes to an enhanced student learning environment is **good practice**.

4.14   As part of the Enhancement Strategy the theme of employability within the curriculum is clearly articulated. The development of employability and entrepreneurial skills is embedded in the higher education ethos. The mission of the Higher Education Strategy is to develop 'innovative and enterprising people enabling excellent learning for employability and social fulfilment'. This is delivered through key aims, one of which centres on working with stakeholders to enhance the curriculum in promoting employability skills. Senior staff emphasise employability as a major focus of higher education provision. The importance of the development of skills for work is well understood and effectively promoted by staff. Students were clear about the range of activities and opportunities provided which would increase their chances of gaining employment. The professional experiences of staff and their links with industry and businesses provide students with opportunities to work on 'live briefs', meet entrepreneurs, take part in local community projects and regional and national competitions with some success. For example, fashion degree students were selected for inclusion at the Northern Youth Fashion Show 2016; Business and Computing students attended a special entrepreneurship masterclass, where students took part in a realistic pitching activity; and four teams from the Faculty of Business and Science were finalists at the Start Up Yorkshire and the Humber Regional Finals and the Hull College team which won will take part in the National Final in London in July 2016. The range of opportunities, locally and nationally, available to students which increases their employability is **good practice**.

The Expectation is met and overall the review team concludes that the College should be commended on the deliberate steps taken at provider level to improve the quality of student learning opportunities. The associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

4.15   On reaching its judgement about the enhancement of student learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

4.15.1   Hull College includes an Enhancement Strategy within its suite of strategies for higher education, thus making enhancement central to its development. This approach has developed a broad approach to the development and improvement of the student learning experience from application to completion of the award and beyond, as alumni. The use of themes taken from the information arising from the quality cycle facilitates flexibility in the length of time which themes last for and their focus.

4.16   As a result of the College's proactive approach to enhancement there were a number of features of good practice: the robust higher education quality cycle which enables the identification and implementation of opportunities for enhancement; the comprehensive partnership working with students which enhances the entire student experience; the involvement of staff in research and scholarly activity which contributes to an enhanced student learning environment; and the range of opportunities, locally and nationally, available to students which increases their employability. The team also affirms that the College's identification of the consequences for students of the long-term absence of key specialist staff had resulted in the establishment of a pool of approved staff with a range of expertise.

4.17   The enhancement of student learning opportunities is **commended**.

5 Commentary on the Theme: Student Employability

Findings

5.1   Hull College demonstrates a high commitment to student employability and entrepreneurial skills in line with its mission. The HE Strategy reiterates the centrality of working with employers and other stakeholders to enhance the curriculum and students' employment opportunities.

5.2   The College is committed to enterprise and innovation for graduate employability based on relevant and engaging curricula. A key area within its higher education provision is the expectation for programme teams and students to have substantial engagement with industry. To achieve this the College works closely with local businesses and employers. Senior staff attend local and regional industry and business networks, some of which are concerned with employment and enterprise strategies. This has a direct influence on the higher education provision, which benefits students. The increased focus on graduate employability led to strategic decision to develop a wider range of High National awards to meet local and regional need for high level technical skills. Programmes within the Faculty of Business and Science are grouped into three clusters which reflect the local and regional areas identified for growth using the respective Local Enterprise Partnerships for each College. Successful recruitment to Higher National awards in Health and Social Care has increased links with local health stakeholders including the NHS, the Clinical Commissioning Group and City Health Care Partnership. Staff also engage in the Digital Technologies Network, hosted by the University of Hull. In 2014-15 a joint development and hosting of the city's Community Crime Conference, a fund raising charity showcase at a local venue, resulted in teams successfully reaching regional and national finals in Business Start Up with Young Enterprise and led to a wide range of events where employers came into the College to talk to groups about employability. In addition, as a consequence of good links with local employers, large and small, student placements often lead to permanent jobs.
In the Faculty of Arts the engagement of staff with many national, community and local councils' initiatives has given students opportunities to work on public spaces' projects such as designing installations for the regenerated Alexandra Dock and commissioned public art which will involve planning the installation, legal and health and safety and construction skills and experience. Arts students also display their work in public galleries, after having made an application to the gallery manager as any professional artist would have to do. Students also have opportunities to curate exhibitions. The successful research grant bid, RAGE, will develop an 'Entrepreneurs Game' which aims to develop creative industry-focused entrepreneurial skill in new graduates entering creative careers.

5.3   The faculties have used employer advice to develop a set of 'graduate attributes' to inform the curriculum. Within the Learning and Teaching and Research Strategies, and within programmes, enterprise and entrepreneurship are a focus for 'employment creation' rather than employment seeking. In all arts programmes a module, Creative Futures, focuses on the development of entrepreneurial and creative industry-based employability skills (soft and hard), including elements such as innovation, professional networking, self-management, autonomous working, client-led projects and an understanding of current sector-specific practice and future directions. The aim is to assist, equip and inform the student as a practitioner into a professional role within their chosen career. In the Faculty of Business and Science, employability skills are contextualised in selected modules for each programme. An increasing focus on adding professional accreditation frameworks and providing industry qualifications alongside the curriculum provides students with added advantages in the employment contest. For example, architecture courses have Architects' Registration Board (ARB) accreditation, Journalism programmes have British Journalism Training Board endorsement and in Computing students gain industry awards (Cisco) and membership of the BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT, funded by the College.

5.4   Students are aware and appreciative of the professional practical skills of their tutors which they feel brings many valuable opportunities to interact with the world of work, employers, entrepreneurs in the public, private, community and voluntary sectors. Higher education staff have made employability skills more prominent in their curricula with the result that students are better able to articulate the transferable competences they have developed as a result of their learning. Students feel that their higher education experience at the College gives them a high probability of undertaking further study or gaining employment as graduates. This is substantiated by the data (DHLE) return on student destination which gives a rate of 72 per cent of those who responded progressing to work or further study.

5.5   The College has set up the Hatch and Platform incubation units which are offered mainly to alumni. Both offer rent-free, managed accommodation, with advice and support, for students wanting to start up their own businesses. Platform is a joint venture with the University of Hull and industry which aims to retain graduates within the city. The Open University revalidation reports have commended the relationships of programmes with employers and the positive impact these have on the quality of the students' learning experience. External examiners also comment on the value of the employer links and the staff professional practice and expertise as having positive impact on supporting the development of employability skills. The Open University and external examiners' reports provide a number of commendations on the programmes' and faculties' achievements in developing students for the diverse work situations they will encounter after graduation and in creating employment opportunities.

5.6   The College is forward-looking in developing curricula for the new employment patterns opportunities of the future. In the both faculties, entrepreneurism has been recognised as an increasingly important area. In the Arts this is because of the innovative and creative nature of its workers and both faculties because of the rapidly developing new technologies. The College, in response to regional priorities for increasing digital capital and capacity and to preparing students for work, has produced its Digital Skills Manifesto and opportunities for students to learn how to set up their own companies and work to live briefs to gain experience in the realistic competitive environment of the world of work and encounter successful professional business people and creatives. Students have had considerable success in fashion, journalism, television, art and design, enterprise and business start-up competitions.

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 30 to 33 of the Higher Education Review 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.

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* (FQHEIS).

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.

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

Quality Code
Short term for the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which is 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.

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.