Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) of HY Education Ltd t/a Apex College London

April 2017

Contents

About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at HY Education Ltd t/a Apex College London. The review took place from 4 to 5 April 2017 and was conducted by a team of two reviewers, as follows:

- Dr Sally Bentley
- Mr Peter Hymans.

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

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

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

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

The QAA website gives more information about QAA[2] and explains the method for Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers).[3] 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] QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk.
[3] Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers):
www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/how-we-review-higher-education.

Key findings

Judgements

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

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

Good practice

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

- The detailed and systematic preparatory work, which has effectively informed the delivery and assessment of the new Higher National Diploma programme (Expectation B1).
- The high quality of teaching supported by well-qualified staff with extensive external teaching experience (Expectation B3).
- The well-established and comprehensive internal process for annual course quality monitoring, with clear action planning, which leads to improvements in delivery (Expectations B8 and A3.3).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations**.

By September 2017:

- formalise the policy on the recruitment and induction of new teaching staff (Expectation B3).

By January 2018:

- extend the appraisal process to include all teaching staff and ensure a closer link between lesson observation and appraisal (Expectation B3)
- further develop the mechanisms to support students' personal and professional development (Expectation B4).

Affirmation of action being taken

The QAA review team **affirms** the following actions already being taken to make academic standards secure and/or improve the educational provision offered to students:

- the steps being taken to continue to develop and deliver a programme of study skills seminars and workshops (Expectation B4).

Financial sustainability, management and governance

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

About the provider

HY Education Ltd t/a Apex College London (the College) was established in 2009 as a private provider of industry and commerce-focused higher education programmes. The College is currently located in Brixton, South West London, although it plans to move premises, at the expiry of its current lease at the end of April 2017, to new accommodation in Elephant and Castle, London.

From 2009-14 the College taught programmes of the Association of Certified Chartered Accountants (ACCA) and the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA). Most students on these programmes during this period were from overseas on a UKVI Tier 4 Licence, although the College ceased enrolling overseas students in 2014.

The College is accredited by one awarding organisation, Pearson, for the delivery of its Higher National Diploma (HND) Business programme. It successfully applied for Course Designation for this programme, which resulted in an allocation of 50 full-time students. The College aims to maintain this number of students at any one time and presently has two student cohorts. The first cohort was enrolled on the HND Business programme in September 2014 and completed in July 2016. A cohort of seven students started the programme in September 2015, and the most recent cohort of 43 students was enrolled in September 2016.

The College's stated mission is to deliver high quality education and training that responds to the needs of individuals. The Strategic Plan sets out a number of core values and seven strategic aims against which the College reviews itself.

The College was subject to Review for Educational Oversight in 2013. The review report identified two areas of good practice and made six advisable and three desirable recommendations for action. The annual monitoring visits in 2014 and 2015 found that the College had made commendable progress against its action plan, and had evaluated its actions.

Explanation of findings

This section explains the review findings in greater detail.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Findings

1.1   The College has no responsibility for the design of the one programme it currently offers. The awarding organisation, Pearson, has primary responsibility for ensuring that the HND Business programme is positioned, aligned and named appropriately according to the FHEQ and that learning outcomes are appropriate to level 5.

1.2   The College uses the standard Pearson HND Business programme specification and relies chiefly on the awarding organisation to ensure that aspects of Expectation A1, including alignment with the FHEQ, are met. There are no Centre-devised units. The review team found that the policies and procedures in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.3   The review team tested the Expectation by consideration of Pearson's programme specification; the College's Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy, and its programme specifications for the courses delivered by the College; and Pearson Academic Management Reviews (AMRs). Meetings were held with the Principal and senior college staff.

1.4   The College is responsible for contributing to the maintenance of the academic standards set by Pearson by designing effective learning materials and a learning and teaching strategy, to meet the learning outcomes of the qualifications. The College has produced its own programme specification contextualised for delivery as required by the awarding organisation. Optional unit choices reflect both staff expertise and student employability requirements. The decision over which option units to offer is made by the Programme Director. Currently, one cohort of students is working on the 2010 HND Business specification, with the latest cohort enrolled on the 2016 HND Business specification.

1.5   Overall, the review team found evidence that the award offered is mapped against relevant national benchmarks through the joint working of the awarding organisation and the College, which implements and monitors its procedures effectively to ensure it meets its responsibilities. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.6   Pearson, as the awarding organisation, is responsible for: establishing and setting the academic framework for the HND Business programme; the level and credit value of each of the units that make up the programme; and ensuring consistency with Ofqual requirements and the FHEQ. Pearson's framework for its qualification, supported by the academic management structure of the College, allow the Expectation to be met in principle.

1.7   The Expectation was tested by the team through meetings with the Principal and senior staff, consideration of the College's academic management structures and Pearson's documentation.

1.8   Pearson is responsible for providing the academic framework and regulations within its specification for the HND Business and its assessment regulations. Within the College there is a clear academic management structure. Responsibility for oversight of academic standards is vested in the Academic Standards Board, with course management within the remit of the Board of Studies.

1.9   The College ensures it fulfils Pearson's requirements through its governance and committee structure, the Executive Board, the Academic Standards Board and the Board of Studies. Given the small size of the College, the three boards cover similar topics of discussion with some overlap in membership, but there is a clear hierarchy and focus to each. The Executive Board oversees matters related to business development; the Academic Standards Board pays particular attention to the approval and review of quality assurance matters; and the Board of Studies addresses more day-to-day student experience matters and course management.

1.10   Pearson sets the framework for assessment of students and requires that assignment briefs clearly identify learning outcomes. To pass an assignment students must meet all learning outcomes specified in the brief. Assessed work is subject to both internal verification and external examination to ensure that intended learning outcomes are achieved. Assessment Boards have clear terms of reference related to the awarding organisation requirements.

1.11   The awarding organisation closely monitors the College's processes to ensure it continues to meet its responsibilities. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.12   Pearson, as the awarding organisation, has responsibility for maintaining the definitive record of the programme and qualification for both variants of the HND Business programmes currently delivered. Pearson requires its approved centres to produce their own versions of the HND Business programme specification. The processes of the awarding organisation, coupled with the College's own processes, would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.13   The review team tested the Expectation by scrutinising the Pearson's documentation and the information provided by the College to students, and through meeting a range of staff and students.

1.14   The College has produced its own contextualised versions of the Pearson HND Business programme specifications. These are based upon the generic version published by Pearson. Students are provided with information about their programme of study in the Student Handbook, which is available to students on the College's virtual learning environment.

1.15   The awarding organisation has primary responsibility, and closely monitors the College's processes to ensure it continues to meet its responsibilities. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.16   Responsibility for the formal academic approval of the HND Business programme rests primarily with Pearson. Through its own approval processes, the awarding organisation has responsibility for positioning the qualification at the appropriate level, creating and aligning the programme outcomes with relevant qualification descriptors, characteristics and Subject Benchmark Statements. These arrangements ensure that the programme meets threshold academic standards and would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.17   The review team examined documentation, including Pearson approval and Centre-monitoring reports, programme specifications, regulations and quality-related documentation. Meetings were held with the Principal, senior management and teaching staff, and students.

1.18   The College is an approved Pearson Centre. It selected the HND Business partly because it was confident it had staffing expertise to deliver it to the required standard. In accordance with Pearson expectations, it formed its own programme specification from the available units, which has been appropriately approved internally through the Academic Standards Board. Pearson confirms that the College has developed an appropriate programme from the units on offer.

1.19   In 2016 Pearson issued a new specification for its HND Business programme, and the College undertook a careful mapping of the differences between the old and new programmes. This enabled the creation of a second set of regulations specific to the new programme. These take account of the change in credit requirements by level, and the number of assessment attempts allowed; thereby the required standards are achieved. This careful cross-checking was part of the detailed and systematic preparatory work undertaken, which effectively informed the delivery and assessment of the new HND programme and is recognised under Expectation B1 as good practice.

1.20   The College meets its limited responsibilities for designing and developing provision by working with the awarding organisation. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

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

Findings

1.21   Pearson is responsible for ensuring that credit is only awarded where students have met the required learning outcomes and UK threshold standards, as articulated in the FHEQ, and that its own standards have been met. Unit specifications provided by the awarding organisation clearly state the learning outcomes to be assessed.

1.22   Pearson operates two separate processes to ensure that the College is meeting the required academic standards: the annual management review and the external examining system, also known as standards verification. Pearson also checks that the College's own internal verification process is fit for purpose and effective, and aligned to Pearson expectations. These arrangements would allow Expectation A3 to be met.

1.23   To test the Expectation the review team examined a range of documentary evidence provided by the College, including programme specifications, commentaries submitted to the awarding organisation, external examiners' reports, and College assessment regulations. The team also discussed arrangements with managers, teachers and students.

1.24   The College is responsible for fulfilling Pearson requirements. This is done effectively through the clearly defined responsibilities of its senior staff, the Academic Standards Board, the Board of Studies and through the implementation of its Quality Manual. The College has a well-articulated internal verification process and an Assessment Board designed to ensure credit is awarded when the learning outcomes are met. Assessment information, together with an annual commentary evaluating the effectiveness of the delivery of the programme, are submitted by the College to Pearson as required.

1.25   The Pearson AMRs and external examiners' reports indicate that the College has made good progress in establishing and developing itself as a delivery Centre. Reports confirm that the internal verification process is properly managed and implemented, and that the Assessment Board ensures that learning outcomes are achieved through assessment processes, which enable both threshold academic standards and Pearson's own requirements to be met.

1.26   The College works effectively in partnership with its awarding organisation and operates successful practices that ensure that credit and qualifications are awarded only where learning outcomes and the academic standards of the awarding organisation have been met. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.27   The awarding organisation is responsible for the monitoring and review of the programme delivered by the College in order to ensure that academic standards are maintained over time. Pearson undertakes its own periodic review of its policies, procedures and programme specifications. Additionally, the College ensures it implements any changes that arise out of the process, and monitoring is undertaken by Pearson through the AMR process. These reviews consist of a commentary submitted by the College, including an evaluation of the way it has met the standards required, an annual monitoring visit by Pearson, a consequent report with recommendations, and a response from the College in the form of a progress monitoring report.

1.28   These arrangements would allow Expectation A3.3 to be met. To review the effectiveness of these processes the review team examined documents from the various review activities, particularly the internal annual course quality monitoring report and the Pearson AMRs, and discussed their operation with staff.

1.29   Pearson has not required approved Centres to produce programme-level internal annual monitoring reports, although this requirement is being introduced. However, the College has generated its own internal quality monitoring process, which has been undertaken since its first cohort of students in 2012-13. These Annual Course Quality Monitoring Reports (ACQMRs) consider matters related to academic standards and include the presentation of management information and performance data on student progression and achievement.

1.30   The external Pearson AMRs over the last three years indicate that the College is managing its delivery increasingly effectively, with the most recent two reports requiring no actions. Areas related to the management of academic standards, which have been strengthened as a result of the internal annual reviews, include the development of a policy for the recognition of prior learning, mitigating circumstances and reasonable adjustments.

1.31   The detailed internal ACQMR process effectively reviews and evaluates key performance indicators; tracks and responds to matters raised in external reports; and notes any changes to assessment or issues that have arisen with respect to the programme or a unit. This process enables the College to assure itself it is maintaining the standards expected by Pearson, as well as UK threshold standards. This well-established and comprehensive internal process for annual course quality monitoring, with clear action planning that leads to improvements, is considered to be good practice under Expectation B8.

1.32   The College operates monitoring and review processes to effectively meet its responsibilities. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

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

Findings

1.33   The responsibility for engaging external and independent expertise largely rests with the awarding organisation. Pearson use external expertise in the Centre approval process, particularly where new Centre approval is being sought and when a new specification has been developed. Centre approval includes a visit to the College by an external reviewer and subsequent report. Pearson also uses an external reviewer to conduct the annual academic management review visits and different external academics act as external examiners.

1.34   These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met. The review team reviewed the Centre approval documentation, the annual management reviews and external examiners' reports, and met both teaching and quality management staff with experience at other higher education institutions.

1.35   The College has engaged with external experts in a positive and active manner, responding to suggestions and advice, and fulfilling all required actions for the maintenance of academic standards. Beyond this, there is little use of external expertise as the College does not design and develop its own programmes and it has not found a need to develop this area. The College effectively responds to external benchmarks, including the Quality Code, Pearson regulations and Centre guidance, and the appropriate qualifications frameworks to ensure it can play its part in meeting threshold standards. Staff teaching and managing the programme draw on solid experience working in other higher education institutions.

1.36   The review team concludes that the Expectation is met through the awarding organisations' own arrangements, which the College engages positively with. The associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

1.37   In reaching its judgement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

1.38   All seven of the Expectations for this judgement area are met and the associated level of risk is low in all areas. There are no features of good practice, recommendations or affirmations in this area. However, the good practice identified under Expectation B8 concerning the well-established and comprehensive internal process for annual course quality monitoring, is reflected in Expectation A3.3.

1.39   The review team notes that the primary responsibility for much of this judgement area lies not with the College but with its awarding organisation, Pearson. The College has good relationships with Pearson and responds appropriately to its requirements. The College has internal policies and processes to ensure that it can meet its responsibilities.

1.40   The review team concludes that maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of the awarding organisation at the College **meets** UK expectations.

2 Judgement: The quality of student learning opportunities

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

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

Findings

2.1 The College does not have responsibility for the design, approval or modification of programmes, as this lies with its awarding organisation. However, the College does from time to time review the awarding organisation and programmes it offers, and has processes to make informed decisions on which units it elects to run from the range offered. While the College remains small and simple in structure and only offers a single programme with one awarding organisation, these arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.2 The review team discussed the design, development and approval processes with the core staff team, considered the annual management review reports from Pearson and the documents related to programme development.

2.3 The Principal and the Executive Board have responsibility for considering changes in academic partners or its programmes, and the implications of this. Pearson's processes are followed to gain approval to deliver selected programmes and units of study. The College has also secured Specific Course Designation in line with UK government requirements. The College does not have a formal internal preparatory or post-approval process when it decides to adjust its portfolio. The Principal leads on the business decision and oversees the process, with the Head of Quality Enhancement responsible for identifying and embedding matters relating to regulations and policies. The Programme Director has responsibility for securing staff, preparing schedules, developing learning materials and recruiting students.

2.4 Through discussion at the Executive Board and key staff, the Principal selected the broadly based HND Business programme. The decision was based on consideration of the anticipated type of applicant and because the generalised programme suited the employability needs of prospective students.

2.5 The College has customised the generic programme specification provided by Pearson to include the most appropriate mandatory and optional units available, following Pearson's guidance. Decisions about which units to offer were based on market demand and staffing expertise, and followed discussions by the Executive Board and Academic Standards Board. Detailed schemes of work are drawn up by the Programme Director in accordance with Pearson requirements in advance of programme delivery. The programme specification is annually updated by the Programme Director, which ensures that any changes made by Pearson are captured.

2.6 Following the introduction by Pearson of a remodelled HND Business programme, the Head of Quality Enhancement conducted a detailed mapping to identify the changes the College needed to make to ensure it could effectively deliver the new course. This mapping led to the development of a second set of regulations for the new programme and the adaptation of the schemes of work with an increased emphasis on employability. The Pearson 2016-17 AMR report refers to this planning tool as an example of 'exemplary

practice'. The review team considers the detailed and systematic preparatory work undertaken, which has effectively informed the delivery and assessment of the new Higher National Diploma programme, to be **good practice**.

2.7   The College is currently in the preliminary stages of expanding its portfolio by providing a part-time route for a Diploma in Education and Teaching. Discussions are currently reflecting on key staffing resource matters, and on completing the move to new premises before beginning formal discussions with Pearson.

2.8   The College discharges its responsibilities for the design, development and approval of new programmes. The review team concludes that the Expectation B1 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

2.9   The College's Admissions Policy and supporting documentation meet the requirements of the awarding organisation, and ensure that appropriate students are recruited to the programme. The processes and procedures outlined in the policy would allow Expectation B2 to be met.

2.10   The review team tested the Expectation by meeting students and admissions staff, and through consideration of the College's admissions policy, results of initial testing, and the information published by the College on its website.

2.11   The Admissions Policy informs recruitment, selection and admissions practice. The policy is clear and comprehensive and contains the appeals process the College carried out a mapping exercise of its admissions process against *Chapter B2*. This mapping confirms its procedures to be reliable, valid, inclusive and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes. In practice, the College's admissions processes are effective in the recruitment of students capable of undertaking the course and motivated to succeed. This is evidenced by improving retention and achievement statistics.

2.12   Prospective students apply using the application form, which is also available on the website. Applicants are invited for interview by at least two staff members. These may be undertaken online, if the applicant is at a distance from the College. Interviews are conducted in accordance with the College's Admissions Interview Guidance document. The interview guidance covers areas including motivation and readiness to study, study skills and relevant work experience.

2.13   To assess the readiness of a prospective student to undertake the programme and their commitment to study, the College gives each prospective student a written assessment task related to the business environment. In line with Pearson requirements, all candidates for whom English is not their first language must provide evidence of English language proficiency at IELTS overall score of 5.5, Reading and Writing at IELTS 5.5, or equivalent from another recognised English proficiency test. Additionally, the College has instituted its own in-house English language test, which all students admitted to the programme have passed.

2.14   The Principal and Programme Director make a final check on all qualifications and, where needed, English language attainment before a formal offer of a place is made. The Principal has overall responsibility for deciding whether to offer a prospective student a place. Following the decision as to accept or reject a candidate the College sends them a standardised acceptance or rejection letter. The rejection letter does not currently contain reference to the appeals process. The College has a clear policy and procedures for admission with advanced standing. This requires documentary evidence that equivalent units of study on the HND Business programme have been passed at another higher education provider.

2.15   The College has well established and thorough admissions systems, which lead to the recruitment of suitable students who are able to benefit from their studies. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching*

Findings

2.16   The College has a range of policies, procedures and deliberative structures, including the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy. These would allow the Expectation B3 to be met.

2.17   The review team tested the Expectation by meeting senior staff, teaching staff and students. The team evaluated a range of policies on learning and teaching, the recruitment of teaching staff and the observation of teaching, and the effectiveness of the deliberative committees.

2.18   The Board of Studies, chaired by the HND Programme Director, has operational oversight of teaching and learning. Its remit includes timetabling, the curriculum, study skills, tutorial support, delivery planning, staff observations, student feedback, results of student surveys, and progression and achievement.

2.19   The ACQMR produced by the Programme Director provides a thorough evaluation of teaching and learning, and identifies clear actions to enhance provision and respond to issues raised by Pearson. The 2015-16 academic year report demonstrates in-depth consideration of teaching and learning, including the outcomes of teaching observations, identifying areas of good practice and areas for enhancement.

2.20   The Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy aims to ensure that teaching staff are experienced teachers and highly qualified in their academic and professional areas of expertise. Although there is no specific recruitment policy for teaching staff, CVs of current staff show that all have extensive higher education teaching experience at other providers, relevant qualifications at master's level or above, and most have a teaching qualification, although not all specific to higher education. Pearson's review in January 2017 confirms the highly qualified teaching staff delivering the programme.

2.21   There is currently no formal induction process for new teaching staff. In practice, new staff receive an organisational induction, at which they are provided with a number of documents including the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy, Unit Guides and First Aid Policy, and are briefed by the Programme Director. The College does not have a procedure for ensuring that staff are capable of teaching and assessing at higher education levels and relies on their previous experience. The review team **recommends** that, by September 2017, the College formalise the policy on the recruitment and induction of new teaching staff.

2.22   Observations of teaching take place annually; staff are observed by the Programme Director, who is observed by the Principal. Observation of teaching is conducted using a standard template, and new members of teaching staff are observed within the first three months and towards the end of their first full calendar year. Once all observations of teaching staff have taken place the Programme Director discusses these with the Principal and identifies any actions. The teaching observations feed into the annual course monitoring process.

2.23   In accordance with the Staff Performance and Appraisal Policy, appraisal is conducted on an annual basis for full-time staff only, and the College states that this follows teaching staff observations. However, there is no mention in the Policy of the requirement to have been observed before being appraised, and neither the policy nor the associated pro forma refer to teaching observations. The review team **recommends** that, by January 2018, the College extend the appraisal process to include all teaching staff and ensure a closer link between observation and appraisal.

2.24   Students have the opportunity to provide feedback on teaching quality through a student survey undertaken in each semester for each study unit. The survey template requires students to indicate how happy they are with the teaching by ticking the relevant box, although the form does not specifically invite qualitative comments. In 2015 -16 students unanimously confirmed that teaching staff were good at explaining the subject, made the subject interesting and are enthusiastic. Feedback from student survey is also considered as part of the annual monitoring report, with actions emerging.

2.25   The student submission to this report states that the teachers make lessons interesting and that lectures are interactive and motivating. Teaching is related to real life commercial scenarios, which helps them to effectively understand the business context for the subjects being taught. Students at the visit confirmed that they were very happy with the quality of teaching. The review team found the high quality of teaching supported by well-qualified staff with extensive external teaching experience to be **good practice**.

2.26   The College has brought together a highly qualified and experienced teaching team and student learning is effective. There are robust procedures to review the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practice to enable and support students to develop as independent learners and study their chosen subject. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B4: Enabling Student Development and Achievement*

Findings

2.27   The College's Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy sets out a clear approach to enabling student development and achievement. The Strategy includes the intention to provide appropriate learning resources and a virtual learning environment (VLE) that supports learning. The College's processes for enabling student development and achievement would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.28   The review team tested the Expectation by scrutinising the structures and policies for ensuring the appropriateness of resources, and met senior staff responsible for resources, and students.

2.29   The College's resources are monitored by Pearson by means of its AMR. The latest report confirms that staffing is appropriate and that the College provides suitable resources that are sufficient and available for the small number of students enrolled on the one programme currently offered.

2.30   The terms of reference of the Board of Studies, chaired by the Programme Director, include operational oversight of pastoral and personal tutorial support, student feedback, and data on withdrawals, progression and achievement. Consideration of an issue relating to the provision of books and e-learning material, initially raised in Pearson's AMR, were appropriately considered and action taken through the Board of Studies.

2.31   At programme level the College monitors learning resources by means of the ACQMR. Action plans within the reports record progress against a number of resource issues, including e-book purchases and online case studies.

2.32   Student development and achievement are supported by an induction process, attendance monitoring, and through the Student Progress Review Policy. This was noted to be effective in the previous QAA review report in 2013. The College commits to giving each individual student the support they need, which is facilitated by small class sizes.

2.33   A VLE has been developed over the last three years and provides key student-facing policies and additional materials for each of the units. Minutes of committees show that consideration of this development is being monitored at all levels in the College. The VLE provides access to assignment briefs, the student handbooks, course booklet and other information, as well as lecture notes and teaching handouts. The Programme Director has overall responsibility for managing and maintaining material on the VLE. There is a guide to minimum standards for the VLE to help ensure that students have a consistent experience of learning support material across all units of the programme.

2.34   Students at the review visit stated that they had limited access to book resources, but the Student Survey Reports show that students are completely satisfied with the learning resources provided to them.

2.35   Students are provided with the academic resources to achieve their learning aims. However, systematic support for their personal and professional development is not currently available. Tutorials are mentioned in the Student Handbook and the Student Charter in relation to the student's obligations to attend them. However, the College has no formal academic or pastoral tutorial policy, although most academic tutorials take place regularly

both on a group and individual basis. If students require assistance for non-academic purposes they can go to any member of staff including the Principal. No member of staff has an explicit responsibility for pastoral support in their job description. Students reported that support for career development is limited and that they would like more careers and employability guidance. The review team **recommends** that, by January 2018, the College further develop the mechanisms to support students' personal and professional development

2.36   The College's 2015-16 ACQMR action plan identifies actions related to the development of a study skills seminars and workshops programme. Although the programme has been developed, only two sessions (out of the nine planned) had been delivered at the time of the review, well over half way through the academic year. The review team **affirms** the steps being taken to continue to develop and deliver a programme of study skills seminars and workshops.

2.37   Students have access to the required resources to achieve their intended learning outcomes. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B5: Student Engagement*

Findings

2.38　　The College has both formal and informal processes to engage students in the assurance and enhancement of the academic experience. It has mapped its systems against *Chapter B5* in order to satisfy itself that it meets its responsibilities. The College's systems are comprehensive and appropriate to the size of provision, and would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.39　　The review team discussed student engagement with student representatives, current students, alumni and staff, and reviewed surveys, reports and meeting minutes to evaluate the effectiveness of the system in practice.

2.40　　There is a formal student representation system described in the College's policy, and supported by a handbook for student representatives. A committee made up of student representatives for each of the two cohorts meets with the Programme Director and the Principal every semester. Student representatives are also members of the Academic Standards Board and Board of Studies. These committees receive key monitoring and review reports including the external examiners' reports and the annual management reviews.

2.41　　The Student Charter, drawn up four years ago in consultation with students and available on the VLE, is discussed annually at the Student Representative Committee and Academic Standards Board. This was identified as an area of good practice in the QAA review in 2013 and consequent annual monitoring visits have confirmed that it continues to be updated through discussion with new students.

2.42　　A formal survey is completed by students for each unit studied towards the end of each term. Key emerging issues feed into the annual quality monitoring reports, with summary survey reports being considered at both the Academic Standards Board and Board of Studies. Minutes of these committees indicate there is evidence that students are able to contribute to issues under discussion, and raise matters of interest to them. Student representatives confirmed this to be the case. Minutes of these meetings are available on the VLE, in addition to key monitoring and review reports.

2.43　　Students report high levels of satisfaction in their surveys and confirm they are able to raise issues and suggest ideas to the College, either through their representatives, the surveys, or directly to the staff at all levels. They have found the College to be generally responsive to their needs and suggestions, and gave examples of the changes seen as a result of their comments. These included improvements in the learning environment, greater online availability of teaching handouts, improved learning resources, and a swift response to issues they raised about the quality of teaching in one unit.

2.44　　Students are comfortable raising matters, including the quality of teaching, despite the small size of their group. Students consider small cohort sizes to be an asset, and value the informal opportunities for raising issues with the Programme Director and the Principal, and praised their general accessibility and responsiveness to student matters.

2.45　　The Principal keeps students informed of changes, such as the current plans to move premises, briefs them on the College's mission and expectations at their induction, seeks early resolution to any emerging complaints, and offers support and guidance on the

more significant and serious student matters.

2.46   The College systematically listens and respond to feedback from students. Student engagement operates effectively through student representative mechanisms, unit surveys and informal feedback, although students are not systematically consulted or involved in the strategic development of the College. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

2.47   The assessment of programmes delivered by the College is overseen by the awarding organisation. Through its policies and procedures the College satisfies itself that the assessment of students is equitable, valid and reliable. The College is responsible for ensuring that its internal processes meet Pearson requirements. Provision has been explicitly mapped against *Chapter B6*. These policies, procedures and arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.48   The review team examined documentation including the Quality Manual, policies and procedures relating to assessment, external examiners' reports, minutes of meetings and student work, and discussed assessment processes with staff and students to evaluate the effectiveness of their implementation.

2.49   The College has a range of appropriate internal systems to fulfil its responsibilities. There are two full sets of assessment regulations for versions of the HND programme offered. The College's Internal Verification Policy provides clear guidance on the process for ensuring that the assignment briefs for summative assessments conform to awarding organisation requirements and are internally verified before being issued to students.

2.50   The College monitors and responds to changes in HND programme specifications and has a system in place to implement any necessary adjustments to assessment. Marking and grading of summative assignments is undertaken in accordance with Pearson requirements and the College's own Internal Verification Policy, and draws on grade descriptors supplied by Pearson. Grades are approved by the Assessment Boards chaired by the Principal.

2.51   The College's policy on feedback on assessed work outlines how feedback should be given to students, and both feedback and grades are provided on individual Achievement Summary Forms. Although these do not include explicit information on how soon after assignment submission students can expect feedback or grades, the College commits to providing timely, relevant, meaningful and encouraging feedback.

2.52   External examiners' reports are considered by the Academic Standards Board and Board of Studies, where students are represented. Issues raised in these reports are incorporated in the academic management reviews and followed-up through the progress monitoring process.

2.53   The Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy commits the College to assessment practices that are transparent, inclusive and fair, and take account of the needs of a diverse student body. The Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy provides a set of guidance documents for staff and students on support available for students if they have extenuating circumstances.

2.54   There is a comprehensive system for addressing matters related to academic misconduct. This includes the Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure, a student guide,

induction briefings, a plagiarism handbook and the extensive use of plagiarism detection software. Assignment hand-in is both paper-based and online to facilitate this process. Students are aware of the Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure and the plagiarism handbook, and receive support and guidance on avoiding plagiarism as part of their induction and teaching.

2.55   The College's Policy for the Recognition of Prior Learning addresses entry with advanced standing, where there is evidence that the student has studied and passed the same units. Information on reasonable adjustments is not currently provided in the Student Handbook, and this process has not yet been used. There is a clear and effective procedure for students with extenuating circumstances.

2.56   The College has made appropriate changes to its assessment regulations following a careful mapping of old and new versions of the HND Business programme. Internal verification of assignment briefs and external examiners' reports confirm that requirements for internal verification have been met and that examiners have not required any actions. Examiners' reports confirm that assessment briefs are written using realistic vocational contexts. Staff and students stated that all assessment briefs are prepared before the start of the term and there is robust oversight all aspects of assessment administration. The College's internal annual course monitoring reports, together with Pearson's reviews, confirm that the operation of the Assessment Boards is effective.

2.57   The Pearson's AMRs for the last three years confirm that all assessment requirements have been met. An action plan captures areas for improvement related to assessment, and actions are effectively signed off on completion. Training is provided on assessment and verification each year to staff by the Programme Director, who has received training from Pearson.

2.58   Following a recommendation from the AMR, the College has strengthened its systems for recording assessment feedback. The consistency and quality of feedback is improving and is effective in supporting student achievement. Feedback to students on assessment uses a mix of standardised feedback against the criteria and learning outcomes, personalised commentaries, and prompt individual verbal feedback. Student Progress Review Reports provide a further end-of-term opportunity to discuss individuals' progress. Work viewed by the team indicated that the level of detail varied across different assignments but the three-strand approach ensures that feedback is clear and developmental. Although there is no policy on the timely provision of feedback, normally students get verbal feedback within three weeks, and grades within four. There is clear notification if these timings are changed. Students find this process to be timely and helpful and they particularly value the feedback tutorials.

2.59   Assessment processes are clear, meet the awarding organisation's expectations and are carefully implemented. The review team concludes that Expectation B6 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B7: External Examining*

Findings

2.60   The awarding organisation is responsible for defining the role of the external examiners, for their selection, appointment, training and recognition. The examiner visits each year, sees samples of student work, meets staff and students, and reports formally on all matters related to assessment and standards to ensure that, through its local procedures, the College meets Pearson's requirements. The examiner identifies any serious concerns and would escalate them, should they occur, to Pearson and the College as appropriate. These arrangements would enable the College to meet the Expectation.

2.61   The review team explored the arrangements through discussions with students and staff and by review of documentation, including external examiners' reports, committee minutes and action plans.

2.62   The first two external examiners' reports indicate that, although a new Centre, the College is making good progress in developing and implementing all the necessary systems as the course embeds, and that minimum requirements are being met. No actions have been required by the external examiner to date, though there is a system in place to ensure tracking and completion of actions should any be needed in future.

2.63   The external examiner reports are considered by the Academic Standards Board Board of Studies, both of which have student representation. The reports are published on the VLE, although students are not explicitly directed to them. To date there have been no serious concerns raised by external examiners.

2.64   The system for external examining is working well and the College makes appropriate use of the reports. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review*

Findings

2.65   The College has its own internal annual monitoring mechanism, which supplements that required by Pearson, systems and processes of which it is expected to follow. Pearson conducts its own periodic programme review, and the College implements any required changes. The College has reflected changes to the HND Business programme specification and assessment procedures as a result of the helpful mapping process it undertook, which is addressed as good practice in Expectation B1. These arrangements provide secure and robust arrangements for monitoring and review.

2.66   The review team considered external and internal reports and their associated action plans, examined policies and procedures for monitoring and review, and held discussions with staff and students.

2.67   As a recently-approved Pearson Centre, the College has received three positive AMRs, which monitor academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities. The first AMR required actions in relation to the management of the admissions processes, reasonable adjustments, assessment feedback, continuing professional development and learning resources. All these matters were addressed in a timely way by the College, and the subsequent two AMRs had no actions to address. The College follows up the outcomes of the AMR through an action planning process, and reports are monitored by the Academic Standards Board and Board of Studies. The College submits a commentary prior to the AMR visit and, after the report is issued, completes a Progress Monitoring Report, which is submitted to Pearson. Students contribute to the process through their representation on the committees where reports are discussed.

2.68   The College has also developed its own internal processes to supplement and inform the Pearson procedures. The Programme Director makes termly reports to the Board of Studies, which provides in-year monitoring, and responds to emerging issues. These reviews, together with external reports, inform the College's ACQMR. The ACQMR is written by the Programme Director, overseen by the Head of Quality Enhancement, and has been produced consistently since 2013. The report covers all matters related to student recruitment and admissions, external oversight, assessment, teaching, learning and student support, feedback from students, the sharing of good practice and quality enhancement. It also includes an analysis of data on recruitment, retention, progression and achievement. The ACQMR is presented to the Academic Standards Board and Board of Studies, and is also shared with Pearson.

2.69   The College's ACQMR process has become more analytical as the College has reviewed and improved its own processes. Actions have been raised and completed, which both respond to and anticipate external comments. The process has supported the development of the College's strategy for teaching and learning, including though the use of more realistic case studies, improved study skills provision and the use of guest speakers. The well-established and comprehensive internal process for annual course quality monitoring, with clear action planning, which leads to improvements in delivery, is **good practice**. This matter is also addressed under Expectation 3.3.

2.70   The College effectively responds to the awarding organisation's monitoring and

review requirements and has effectively supplemented this with its own internal procedures. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints*

Findings

2.71   The College has appropriate policies and procedures in place for the management of student complaints and academic appeals within the policies, procedures and guidance that are provided by the awarding organisation, the Centre approval process of which ensures that the necessary practices are in place.

2.72   A flowchart and form provide clear guidance to students on how to formally complain or submit an academic appeal. The College has responded to the requirement that alternative providers with Course Designation subscribe to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. These arrangements for complaints and academic appeals would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.73   The review team considered the policies and procedures in place and discussed their implementation with staff and students.

2.74   The documentation on student complaints and academic appeals is introduced to students at induction, and is summarised in the Student Handbook and available on the VLE. No issues about the policies and procedures have been raised by external bodies, staff or students. The systems work effectively and no formal complaints or appeals have been received in the past year. The College places a deliberate and successful emphasis on informal early resolution of any issues raised, capitalises on its small scale, and effectively uses its systems for student representation and feedback. Students reported that the College is very responsive to informal complaints and that any concerns they had about the assessment process are resolved swiftly.

2.75   The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

2.76   The College does not work with any other organisation other than with its awarding organisation. Therefore this Expectation is not applicable.

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

Quality Code, *Chapter B11: Research Degrees*

Findings

2.77   The College does not offer research degrees, therefore this Expectation is not applicable.

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.78   In reaching its judgement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

2.79   All Expectations in this area are met and the associated level of risk is low in all areas. The review team identified three areas of good practice and one affirmation. These are under Expectations B1, related to the systematic preparation for the new programme; Expectation B3, concerning the high quality of teaching staff; and Expectation B8, the annual monitoring process. Under Expectation B4, the team affirms the action in further developing the study skills programme.

2.80   The review team concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities at the College **meets** UK expectations.

3 Judgement: The quality of the information about learning opportunities

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

Quality Code, Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision

Findings

3.1 The College's Information about Higher Education Policy and Procedure has been mapped to the Quality Code, Part C. The Policy provides details of the types of information the College produces and clearly states the responsibilities for approval prior to publication.

3.2 The College website is the main form of communication with the public and prospective students. The Principal and Vice-Principal are responsible for the accuracy of all information concerning academic programmes and other material published on the website. They are also responsible for the accuracy of materials related to the description of the College, application and admissions processes, fee information and general information for students. Information for current students and staff must be approved by the Vice-Principal, before being made available to students on the VLE. These policies and procedures would allow the Expectation to be met.

3.3 The review team explored the College's approach to the production of information by viewing documentation, including a wide range of information available electronically, websites, handbooks and programme specifications. In addition, the review team met staff and undergraduate students to verify its findings.

3.4 All published material is approved by the Principal, or Vice-Principal, using the Information about Education Approval Form. Completed forms show that the system is being used systematically to ensure that it is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. Documents, policies, procedures and processes concerned with the College's management of academic standards and management of the quality of student learning opportunities are mostly produced by the Head of Quality Enhancement and the Programme Director. Minutes of the Academic Standards Board confirm its role in having oversight of this process.

3.5 Student views about key publications, including the Student Handbook and the Student Charter, are obtained through feedback from student representatives at the Student Representative Committee, and through a question about information within the student survey. Students stated that they found the information given to them prior to joining the course, and following enrolment, to be accurate and informative.

3.6 The VLE has been systematically improved since 2013 with a greater range of support material, policies and procedures posted. The College has agreed a minimum standard for programme and unit information to which it adheres. The VLE includes information for enrolled students including the Student Charter, Student Handbook, course booklet, unit guides, induction and general learning support materials. Electronic versions of documentation for students are sometimes supplemented by paper copies, although this is considered increasingly unnecessary. The VLE also contains a range of policies and procedures useful and accessible to both staff and students. The VLE now forms an effective repository of information for students and is also helpful for tutors.

3.7   The College has appropriate systems for controlling the publication of information. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

3.8   The Expectation for this judgement area is met and the associated level of risk is low.

3.9   Information published by the College is fit for purpose and trustworthy. Processes for the development and verification of information are understood by staff. Students confirm that information is comprehensive, accessible and helpful to them, and that they are provided with sound information to support their learning.

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

4 Judgement: The enhancement of student learning opportunities

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

Findings

4.1 The College's Strategic Plan and its Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy together form the framework of principles that govern the enhancement of student learning opportunities. Decisions about this strategic approach are taken based on external guidance and expectations, notably those provided by Pearson and QAA, along with executive priorities and formal and informal feedback from students. This approach would allow the Expectation to be met.

4.2 The review team considered the College's strategies and discussed enhancement with staff at all levels, and with students.

4.3 The College's documents and discussions at key committees clearly articulate enhancement as the continuous improvement of learning opportunities. The College systematically addresses fully any guidance and recommendations from external bodies. This approach fosters improvement and the establishment of a culture of enhancement. The College's ACQMR is an important part of this process as it records good practice and areas for enhancement, and allows the development of a comprehensive action plan.

4.4 The College has identified and implemented a range of strategic initiatives that focus on areas where enhancement opportunities have been identified. Examples of improvements include providing more detailed study skills support, more e-books, guidance on the Prevent Strategy, and greater use of interactive teaching methods.

4.5 The College's has taken some tentative deliberate steps to significantly improve the quality of students' learning opportunities. In 2014-15 the College took the decision to establish a VLE, which is now fully embedded and provides a very helpful and appropriate addition to the learning resource infrastructure. In 2016-17 the decision to move premises was partly predicated on the desire to re-balance the College's financial outlay to ensure that continued resources can be made available to enhance the student experience. The mapping of the requirements of the new HND specification demonstrates another self-initiated step with identified areas for improvement. These enhancements include more opportunities to develop employability skills and plans to foster the career ambitions of its students. An annual awards ceremony has been established, which allows the mixing of student cohorts, and alumni are increasingly used as guest speakers to raise aspirations, and real-life case studies are being used to provide more employment-focused scenarios for assessment.

4.6 The College has a commitment to improving student learning opportunities and the establishment of a culture of promoting excellence is emerging. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

4.7   In reaching its judgement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

4.8   The College has an emerging culture of enhancement, which is appropriate to the small scale of provision. The Expectation in this area is met and the associated level of risk is low.

4.9   The review team concludes that the enhancement of student learning opportunities at the College **meets** UK expectations.

Glossary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

e-learning
See technology enhanced or enabled learning.

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

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

Flexible and distributed learning
A programme or module that does not require the student to attend classes or events at particular times and locations. See also **distance learning**.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Technology enhanced or enabled learning (or **e-learning**)
Learning that is delivered or supported through the use of technology.

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

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

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