



# **ICON College of Technology and Management Ltd**

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

June 2013

## Key findings about ICON College of Technology and Management Ltd

As a result of its Review for Educational Oversight carried out in June 2013 the QAA review team (the team) considers that there can be **confidence** in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of Pearson and the University of the West of England, Bristol.

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

The team considers that **reliance can** be placed on the information that the provider produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

### Good practice

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

- the comprehensive and timely support for students (paragraphs 2.12 and 2.13).

### Recommendations

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

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

- review its committee structure (paragraph 1.3)
- improve its lesson observation process (paragraph 2.7).

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

- complete its Quality Manual (paragraph 1.5)
- further engage with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (paragraph 1.7)
- review its approach to monitoring responses to external examiner reports (paragraph 1.9)
- enhance its Teaching and Learning Strategy (paragraph 2.6)
- review the consistency of feedback to students on their assessed work (paragraph 2.14)
- develop a more systematic approach to the identification of staff development needs (paragraph 2.16)
- formalise the identification and dissemination of good practice (paragraph 2.17)
- further develop the use of the virtual learning environment (paragraph 2.20).

## About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Educational Oversight](#)<sup>1</sup> (REO) conducted by [QAA](#) at ICON College of Technology and Management Ltd (the provider; the College), which is a privately funded provider of higher education. The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the provider discharges its stated responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes of study that the provider delivers on behalf of Pearson and the Management Development Partnership, an accredited institution of the University of the West of England, Bristol. The review was carried out by Mr Seth Crofts, Mrs Amanda Greason, Mr Rob Mason (reviewers) and Dr Heather Barrett-Mold (coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the [Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook](#).<sup>2</sup> Evidence in support of the review included: the self-evaluation; samples of student work; annual monitoring reports; external examiners' reports; further documentation supplied by the provider; and meetings with staff and students.

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

- the UK Quality Code for Higher Education
- guidance from Pearson
- guidance from the University of the West of England, Bristol (UWE).

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

The College is an independent private institution whose proprietor is ICON College of Technology and Management Ltd. It is situated in Whitechapel, East London. It took its first intake of students at the start of the academic year in 2003. The majority of its students came from overseas, mainly from South Asia. Since then the College has grown rapidly. It currently has 1,562 students, although now over 90 per cent of the student body is from the UK and EU. The College occupies a part of a building along one side of Adler Street, on the edge of the City of London; the building is a converted industrial site, which has been adapted for educational purposes.

The College's mission includes the aim to provide education of excellent quality at an economic price. The College was awarded continuing accreditation following inspections by the British Accreditation Council, most recently in 2012. The 2012 inspection imposed no requirements on the College but made recommendations which have been made the subject of action by the senior management team. QAA reported on the College after an REO visit in 2012. A second review resulted from the substantial increase in student numbers since the initial REO visit in 2012.

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

### **Pearson**

- BTEC HND in Computing and Systems Development
- BTEC HND in Electrical and Electronic Engineering

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<sup>1</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/educational-oversight](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/educational-oversight)

<sup>2</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx)

- BTEC HND in Business
- BTEC HND in Business (Law)
- BTEC HND in Travel and Tourism Management
- BTEC Extended Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership

#### **University of the West of England, Bristol**

- BSc (Hons) Business Management
- BSc (Hons) Tourism and Hospitality Management

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

The College's responsibilities in relation to Pearson and the University of the West of England, Bristol (UWE) are clearly defined through formal agreements. For all awards, the College is responsible for learning and teaching, student support and learning resources. For Pearson courses the College is responsible for setting and marking assessments in accordance with Pearson's regulations. There is a shared responsibility for public information. The College is responsible for recruitment of students on Pearson programmes and shares this responsibility with UWE for the BSc top-up degree programmes. Both Pearson and UWE provide the curriculum and some resources.

### **Recent developments**

The most recent developments are that in 2010 the College had over 1,000 students, but in 2012, due to changes in immigration rules, this reduced to 472. Now, in 2013, there is a very high proportion of UK/EU students and the number has risen to 1,562. The College previously worked with UWE through a managing agent but now has a direct relationship with the University for this cohort only and is seeking a partner for level 6 top-up degree programmes.

### **Students' contribution to the review**

The College has kept students informed of the review process. Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the review team. A student questionnaire was provided for student representatives who consulted their associated groups, and responses to this were made available at the review. The team found these responses helpful and explored student views in meetings with students to gain a clear picture of the student learning experience.

## Detailed findings about ICON College of Technology and Management Ltd

### 1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The College's management of academic standards is satisfactory and staff are aware of their responsibilities for the assurance of academic standards for the awards of the University of the West of England, Bristol (UWE) and Pearson. For the former, responsibility for the setting of standards rests solely with UWE. The College delivers the programmes and first-marks final projects. The setting and marking of assignments and second marking of final year research projects is undertaken by UWE, which also liaises with external examiners and oversees external moderation. Early in 2013, the College entered into the current direct relationship with UWE from which time it assumed responsibility for first-marking of projects. Early feedback from UWE indicates that the marking of these projects meets the required standards. External examiners' reports confirm that the College is meeting its responsibilities for programme delivery and assessment under its accreditation agreement with Pearson, as contained in the Quality Assurance Manual for Pearson awards.

1.2 The College has an extensive committee structure which would benefit from simplification and a redefinition of terms of reference. An Academic Standards Advisory Group provides an essential external perspective while overseeing the College at strategic and operational level. The Academic Board and Quality Assurance Board meet twice a year. The Academic Board is the ultimate authority for academic standards. The Quality Assurance Board oversees quality and standards and the requirements of the awarding body and organisation. There are in addition five assessment boards, one for each programme area, and a Policies and Procedures Sub-Committee which reports to Academic Board. Given the role of the Quality Assurance Board in quality the College should review its reporting line. There are three further committees: a Staff and Student Liaison Committee for each faculty or department, a Disciplinary Committee and an Academic Misconduct Committee. The Senior Management Team provides a forum for day-to-day matters and reports relevant matters to the Academic Board.

1.3 The committee terms of reference are brief and do not sufficiently define their specific responsibilities. Minutes of meetings are comprehensive in recording the discussions but do not always clearly indicate the progress with actions required from one meeting to another. Minutes of meetings sometimes record that the same discussions are repeated at different committees. The Academic Board receives the annual monitoring reports from programmes but does not collate issues and actions to provide an overview report nor does it monitor actions arising from the reports. Discussions with staff indicated that not all are clear on the purposes of the committees and students see their membership exclusively as an opportunity to provide feedback on issues and concerns rather than to contribute to the College's decision-making processes. The team acknowledges that some elements of the committee system are relatively new. Nevertheless, it is **advisable** for the College to review its committee structure with a view to simplifying it while assuring its effectiveness.

1.4 The College has a coherent management structure that is effective in the oversight of its provision. The College recently established the post of Head of Quality and Enhancement, which is responsible for monitoring the standards and quality of teaching and learning and for ensuring compliance with awarding body/organisation requirements.

This role has the potential to be critical in the College's management of standards and quality assurance enhancement.

1.5 The College's brief Quality Policy sets out its expectations with regard to quality and standards, including module and programme evaluation and periodic review. The collation into the Quality Manual of the various policies and procedures would make it easier for staff and students to access the current version of key documents. It is **desirable** for the College to expedite the completion of its Quality Manual, making it available on the virtual learning environment and ensuring that it includes reference to the committee system.

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

1.6 The Pearson programmes reflect the awarding organisation's benchmarks and the College is aware that these meet the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). The UWE programmes are designed and approved by UWE and so the College has not until now been responsible for using external reference points to guide it in setting its own award standards. In response to a recommendation of the previous REO, the College has developed a pro forma for initial course approval which requires reference to relevant external reference points. The College has yet to use this pro forma as it has not developed a new course since its inception.

1.7 The College has taken initial steps to ensure that it becomes familiar with and engages with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) with the result that awareness of the Quality Code at senior level is growing. Despite the fact that staff across the College attended a seminar on the Quality Code, understanding by teaching staff is low. A number of policies and practices refer to chapters of the Quality Code although the College has yet to map its policies, procedures and practice against the Quality Code to assure itself that it meets its expectations. It has yet to consider how its committee system may discharge strategic oversight with regard to the Quality Code. It is **desirable** for the College to further engage with the Quality Code.

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

1.8 Staff clearly understand their responsibilities for assessment. See also paragraph 1.1 .

1.9 The College's internal verification processes for the Pearson programmes works well and external examiners' reports confirm this. The assessment committees play a key role in the assessment process and provide an effective forum for discussion of assessment matters, including the outcomes of internal verification and external examiners' reports. However, the College has no clear overview of issues raised in external examiner reports. It is **desirable** for the College to review its approach to monitoring responses to external examiners' reports.

1.10 The College has not received any external examiner reports for its UWE programmes as all communications with external examiners was the responsibility of the managing agent which is no longer involved. A contract has been signed with UWE to cover the remaining students and this clearly states that UWE will provide the College with the reports. The College will wish to consider how it will deal with this report in the absence of an assessment committee for these programmes.

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

## 2 Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1 Management responsibility for the quality of learning opportunities lies with the Principal. For BSc top-up programmes, responsibility for quality assurance lies with UWE. For Pearson programmes operational responsibilities are delegated to heads of department who compile annual reports using data and information from tutor unit evaluations, lesson observations, student feedback and statistical data. These are presented to the Quality Assurance Board which in turn reports on quality issues to the Academic Board through its annual report and appropriate actions are considered.

2.2 Overall, the monitoring of the quality of learning opportunities is satisfactory. Monitoring of the quality of learning opportunities at programme level uses student feedback and unit evaluation forms. Heads of department report issues to the Principal who decides the appropriate actions. The College provides feedback to the students through the Staff and Student Liaison Committees.

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

2.3 The College uses comments from Pearson external examiners relating to student support, teaching, and resources to compare the quality and management of learning opportunities against external reference points. Overall, comments are positive and constructive.

2.4 The College uses subject benchmark statements effectively to set out its expectations for the standards of its programmes in the centre-designed higher national specifications. In addition, the College has used the Quality Code to inform policy development, for example, the College's Student Support and Admissions Policies. Links to the Quality Code are located on the College's virtual learning environment for both staff and student access.

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

2.5 The College monitors the quality of teaching and learning. Heads of department ensure that teaching notes uploaded to the virtual learning environment cover the appropriate learning outcomes. Information about teaching and learning from student feedback and unit evaluations is reported to the Quality Assurance, Academic, and Assessment Boards. Students confirm that teaching is good. Not all minutes of meetings outline necessary actions and related responsibilities where needed. Progress is fed back to students through Student Liaison Team Meetings.

2.6 The College's Teaching and Learning Strategy emphasises the importance of students becoming independent learners and assimilating knowledge and skills. Although the strategy outlines broad areas for fulfilling its purposes, there is limited content on

processes and mechanisms to support the maintenance and enhancement of teaching and learning. It is **desirable** for the College to enhance its Teaching and Learning Strategy.

2.7 The College uses a formal teaching and learning observation process to monitor teaching quality. There is an intention to have two observations a year for each member of staff by senior staff. Some tutors also observe each other. Tutors welcome feedback on their lessons. A checklist is used to record outcomes and observers can note supplementary comments. However, these mainly relate to teaching methods, resource use, and attendance, and do not focus sufficiently on learning and the expectations of the College's teaching and learning strategy, for example developing independence and assimilation of knowledge and skills. In addition, few comments relate to training and development needs. It is **advisable** for the College to improve its lesson observation process.

2.8 Teaching staff are very well qualified and a large proportion holds doctorates and higher degrees. Approximately one third hold an appropriate teaching qualification. The selection procedure for new staff is undertaken by senior managers and UWE also checks the curriculum vitae of those teaching on the BSc top-up programmes. New tutors are effectively supported during their initial period of teaching and are allocated mentors. The College has been approved to offer Pearson teaching in lifelong learning qualifications for non-qualified staff. However, the programme has not yet commenced.

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

2.9 The College has well-established arrangements for the admission of students to Pearson and the UWE BSc top-up programmes. All applicants are interviewed and senior staff approve their programme before a place is offered.

2.10 All new Pearson students have a full day induction and are provided with handbooks, programme details, policies, regulations including plagiarism and attendance, and administrative and domestic information. Library induction sessions update students on new resources. Returning students have a shortened induction, giving an overview of any important changes. BSc top-up induction is carried out by UWE staff.

2.11 Students are well represented on College bodies, including the Quality Assurance and Academic Boards, and the Staff Student Liaison Committee. A Staff Student Liaison Officer is responsible for communicating student views to management at termly Liaison Committee meetings. Other methods of gathering feedback are unit evaluations and surveys carried out each semester. The latter are analysed externally and findings are dealt with at tutor, departmental or College level depending on the response needed. Students confirm that the response to the issues they raise is prompt and effective.

2.12 All students are allocated a personal tutor at the start of their programme. Tutors make themselves available at specific times for bookable appointments. Students can also seek help at any reasonable time by email, through the virtual learning environment or personally. Students value the services of the Student Welfare and Careers Adviser who is available three days a week for pastoral and career support. The comprehensive and timely support for students is **good practice**.

2.13 The monitoring of student attendance is thorough and attendance rates are high. An attendance monitoring team is managed by the Head of Student Monitoring and Compliance. Texts, emails and letters are sent to students if necessary through an electronic system. This procedure is highly motivating. The importance of high attendance is also a feature of induction and the consequences of non-attendance are included in student handbooks.



2.14 Assessment feedback on assignments is linked clearly to module learning outcomes but is of variable quality. Much is very good and clearly explains to the student how they can improve, but other feedback is more general and does not explain how work can be improved or how a grading decision has been made. It is **desirable** for the College to review the consistency of feedback to students on their assessed work.

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

2.15 There is no formal system for identifying staff development and little training and development has taken place or is planned by the College. There are no formal references or mechanisms within the terms of reference of the College committees and boards and no significant discussions or references to staff development planning and delivery in minutes of any meetings.

2.16 The staff development policy outlines how individual staff development needs are identified. This policy is closely linked to the staff appraisal process that includes a personal training plan. At the time of the review only two staff have been appraised and it is too early to measure the impact or effectiveness of the policy. Staff are well qualified and attend conferences and other training events on a personal basis. However, these are not systematically recorded by the College or used to disseminate information or good practice. It is **desirable** for the College to develop a more systematic approach to the identification of staff development needs.

2.17 Mechanisms for identifying and sharing good practice are largely informal. There are no clear statements or references to good practice in the terms of reference for committees, particularly the Quality Assurance, Academic, and Assessment Boards. Good practices noted in the annual report are essentially action points. Assessment Boards discuss good practice but there is no mechanism for promoting it more widely. Unit evaluations fail to note good practice although a facility for this exists. It is **desirable** for the College to formalise the identification and dissemination of good practice.

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

2.18 Heads of department are responsible for identifying course resource needs through discussions with tutors. Within budget limitations the College responds effectively to additional resource requests, for example, a student request for more engineering and tourism texts. Wireless internet access is available in some areas of the College.

2.19 The College library is well resourced to support independent learning and research. The Library Committee reviews library access and stock to ensure that learning resources are accessible to students and sufficient to enable them to achieve the intended learning outcomes. Students on the BSc top-up degree programmes have online access to UWE's library.

2.20 The College's virtual learning environment (VLE) is used mainly as a repository for electronic versions of rules, regulations, course documentation, reading lists, e-materials, e-journals, and some lesson notes, mainly slide show presentations. Staff have access to the VLE to upload their material subject to the approval of the Principal or heads of department. Students agree that the VLE is user friendly and well laid out, but would like to see a wider range of electronic lesson documents, including more electronic versions of handouts, to enable remote access. Students reported that on some occasions there was a delay in course notes and other resources being published on the VLE. There is limited use

of the VLE as an interactive teaching and learning instrument, for example by means of online discussions and group work. It is **desirable** for the College to further develop the use of the virtual learning environment.

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

### 3 Public information

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

3.1 The College has a clear strategy for communication with students and prospective applicants through the use of well-designed information delivered through a variety of media. The College produces high quality advertising flyers and course leaflets used to promote the provision. There is an effective website, which provides students with information about the learning opportunities at the College, including programme details, the application process and tuition fees. A comprehensive prospectus provides detailed and accurate information for prospective students and is available through the College website.

3.2 The virtual learning environment is the key mechanism for delivering information to students; such as that in the handbooks. Student handbooks are reviewed annually and provide extensive information for students in relation to life at the College and major policies such as assessment, appeals and academic misconduct. Students reported that these handbooks are detailed and useful and form a key part of the induction process. Programme specifications, developed by the awarding body and organisation, are available on the VLE. They are clear and valued by the students. External examiners' reports for the majority of programmes are made available to students through the same platform. The College is in the process of adopting social media as an additional mechanism for communicating with students. This facility will be linked to the College's website, which is undergoing a major review.

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

3.3 The College is effective in its measures to ensure that promotional material is fit for purpose. Marketing information is managed by the Marketing Committee, and the Principal takes a role in formulating advertisements and other material for international promotion of the College. The College leadership team is taking steps to ensure that information communicated through social media is complete and accurate.

3.4 The Academic Board takes final responsibility for checking the accuracy of information about learning opportunities. Promotional material is carefully monitored by the Principal who liaises with the Managing Director and the Head of Quality and Enhancement to ensure accuracy and completeness before being disseminated to students and other stakeholders.

3.5 Agents are engaged by the College to support recruitment in a number of local and international markets. The College has established clear contractual relationships with agents which prevent them from producing publicity material that has not been approved by the College. The College takes care to check that information developed by agents is accurate.

3.6 A review of all policies and procedures is taking place under the direction of the College's Policy and Procedures Sub-Committee (see paragraph 1.2). This review aims to ensure that all policies are clearly aligned with the Quality Code. The College has started to implement systems to manage version control for all policies and procedures it produces.

The team concludes that **reliance can be placed** on the information that the provider produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

## Action plan<sup>3</sup>

ICON College of Technology and Management Ltd action plan relating to the Review for Educational Oversight June 2012						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The review team identified the following areas of <b>good practice</b> that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the comprehensive and timely support for students (paragraphs 2.12 and 2.13).</li> </ul>	Align College provision with Chapter B4 of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) through establishment of a working group (facilitated by Head of Quality and Enhancement) including staff and students to resolve how existing provision might be enhanced in light of Chapter B4 Indicators and with reference to staff and student feedback	Working group to meet in September 2013 and its report to be implemented by end January 2014	Principal, Managing Director, heads of department/faculty and Head of Quality and Enhancement, student representatives	Involving key staff and student representatives in reviewing Chapter B4 resulting in enhancement of student support positively reflected in April 2014 Student Feedback Survey	Academic Board	Academic Board to evaluate alignment with Chapter B4 of the Quality Code in the light of Student Affairs Committee (replacing Staff/Student Liaison Committee) report to Academic Board using data from April 2014 Student Feedback Survey

<sup>3</sup> The College has been required to develop this action plan to follow up on good practice and address any recommendations arising from the review. QAA monitors progress against the action plan, in conjunction with the College's awarding body and organisation.

Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<p>The team considers that it is <b>advisable</b> for the College to:</p>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>review its committee structure (paragraph 1.3)</li> </ul>	<p>Review, rationalise and republish the structure, terms of reference and briefs of committees and also defined responsibilities of officers</p>	<p>31 January 2014</p>	<p>Principal and Managing Director</p>	<p>Feedback from staff and student members of all committees as to coherence and economy of the structure</p>	<p>Academic Board</p>	<p>Academic Board</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improve its lesson observation process (paragraph 2.7).</li> </ul>	<p>Produce a proactive policy for peer observation that addresses effective dissemination of good practice and monitoring and strategic review of peer observation</p> <p>Create pro forma for peer observation reports to include developing independence and assimilation of knowledge and skills by students and identifying training and development needs of staff</p>	<p>1 March 2014</p>	<p>Policies and Procedure Panel of Quality Assurance Board</p>	<p>All teaching staff made aware of policy by deadline</p> <p>Pro forma is correctly used by observers</p> <p>Reports of observers analysed by heads of department and presented to Quality Assurance Board</p> <p>Appropriate training needs stemming from this exercise are addressed</p>	<p>Principal and heads of department/faculty</p>	<p>Quality Assurance Board by reference to staff and student feedback</p> <p>Academic Board</p>

	Also undertake appropriate revision of Teaching and Learning Strategy to align with Chapter B3 of the Quality Code			Teaching and Learning Strategy is aligned with the Quality Code, Chapter B3		
<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Action to be taken</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Action by</b>	<b>Success indicators</b>	<b>Reported to</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
The team considers that it is <b>desirable</b> for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>complete the Quality Manual (paragraph 1.5)</li> </ul>	Ensure that the Quality Manual is appropriately completed and then communicated to all staff and students	1 March 2014	Quality Assurance Board	Thorough and explicit alignment with all expectations of the Quality Code and a document that is effective and has operational utility, as evidenced through staff and student feedback	Academic Board	Academic Board by reference to staff and student feedback recognising utility and effectiveness of Quality Manual in light of the Quality Code
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>further engage with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (paragraph 1.7)</li> </ul>	Specific discussions on Chapters B3, B5 and B6 to be facilitated with key members of staff; outcomes to be taken into account in review of College procedures	18 December 2013, 22 January 2014, 19 March 2014, and thereafter to consider other Chapters in	Principal and Head of Quality and Enhancement	Positive feedback from workshops and effective use in the development and delivery of programmes  Alignment with indicators (and/or precepts) of Chapters of the	Quality Assurance Board	Academic Board

		similar fashion		Quality Code observable in peer observation of teaching, student feedback and specific report as to such alignment by Head of Quality and Enhancement in College Annual Report		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>review its approach to monitoring responses to external verifier reports (paragraph 1.9)</li> </ul>	Take due account of the Quality Code, Chapter B7 (Indicators 15 and 16) in provision of policies and procedures applicable to all departments across the College; to include overview of external verifier reports and response to them, in College Annual Report	1 March 2014	Policy and Procedure panel of Quality Assurance Board, Assessment Boards and Student Affairs Committee (ex-student/ staff liaison committees)	All external examiner recommendations and action points considered in a coherent, systematic manner and acted upon within two weeks of being delivered	Quality Assurance Board	Academic Board in strategic review of assessment boards and Student Affairs Committee (replacing staff/ student liaison committees)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>enhance the Teaching and Learning Strategy (paragraph 2.6)</li> </ul>	Take due account of the Quality Code, Chapter B3 in provision of Teaching and Learning Strategy, including provision for monitoring the	Start of December 2013	Policy and Procedure panel of Quality Assurance Board	Teaching and Learning strategy more comprehensive, of more utility to teachers, and in supporting the teaching/learning	Principal Heads of department/ faculty Managing Director	Academic Board in light of majority improvement in levels of student satisfaction with teaching and learning on all criteria of student

	effectiveness of its implementation			process in the College as evidenced by staff and student feedback		feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>review the consistency of feedback to students on their assessed work (paragraph 2.14)</li> </ul>	<p>Workshops for and management direction of teaching staff, followed by disciplinary action in cases where this may be appropriate</p> <p>Procedure for rejection of inappropriate assessments, by exams officers</p>	Start of January 2014	Heads of department/faculty	<p>Opinion survey of internal verifiers as to consistent feedback based on their sampled assessments across the departments in which they function</p> <p>Exam Office statistics of rejected assessments showing 100% reduction by end of second semester of recording</p> <p>Satisfaction with system of feedback and its consistent implementation to be collected by Principal and analysed and reviewed in Annual Report plus Report by Exam Office of</p>	<p>Principal in completing college-wide survey for Annual Report</p> <p>Managing Director</p>	Quality Assurance Board and Academic Board in establishing satisfaction across College expressed by internal and external verification reports



				statistics of inappropriate assessments rejected, made to Principal for inclusion in College Annual Report		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop a more systematic approach to the identification of staff development needs (paragraph 2.16)</li> </ul>	<p>Policy and procedures designed to enhance engagement of teaching staff with staff development in line with the Quality Code to ensure that non-teaching staff are included in process;</p> <p>to ensure identification of teacher development needs is in line with current advances in pedagogy and College Teaching and Learning Strategy;</p> <p>to ensure implementation through peer observation and performance review</p>	End of January 2014	Policies and procedures panel of Quality Assurance Board, heads of department/ faculty and Managing Director	Coherent proposals for identification of training needs across the College	Academic Board	Quality Assurance Board and Academic Board by reference to the Annual Report (college-wide) with appropriate recommendations for action

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>formalise the identification and dissemination of good practice (paragraph 2.17)</li> </ul>	<p>Meetings of whole College staff</p> <p>Forums for all staff on virtual learning environment; agenda of assessment boards and student affairs committee (ex-staff/student liaison committees) to include opportunity for identifying and sharing good practice</p>	<p>End of January 2014</p>	<p>Heads of department/faculty</p> <p>Managing Director</p>	<p>Celebration of good practice impacting on student experience at college-wide meetings</p>	<p>Principal</p>	<p>Academic Board and Quality Assurance Board by reference to minutes of meetings of all College staff, feedback by heads of department on use of virtual learning environment for dissemination of good practice and minutes of Student Affairs Committee (ex-staff/student liaison committees)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>further develop the use of the virtual learning environment (paragraph 2.20).</li> </ul>	<p>Include electronic versions of teaching materials on virtual learning environment, and ensure that virtual learning environment can be remotely accessed</p> <p>Train heads of department consistently to upload material on virtual learning environment</p> <p>Bring pressure on teaching staff and</p>	<p>Mid-January 2014</p>	<p>Principal, heads of department/faculty and Managing Director</p>	<p>Semester surveys of both teaching staff and students as to utility of virtual learning environment</p>	<p>Academic Board</p>	<p>Quality Assurance Board and Academic Board on basis of Annual Report to include data as to staff and student use (quantitative and qualitative) of virtual learning environment and heads of department reports as to content of virtual learning environment within their departments/faculty</p>

	<p>heads of department/faculty</p> <p>(1) to avoid delay in course notes and other resources being published on the virtual learning environment</p> <p>(2) use of the virtual learning environment as an interactive teaching and learning instrument, for example by means of online discussions and group work</p> <p>(3) to provide online marking and feedback</p>					
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## About QAA

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

QAA's aims are to:

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

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

More information about the work of QAA is available at: [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk).

More detail about Review for Educational Oversight can be found at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/educational-oversight](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/educational-oversight).

## Glossary

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

**Academic Infrastructure** The core guidance developed and maintained by QAA in partnership with the UK higher education community and used by QAA and higher education providers until 2011-12 for quality assurance of UK higher education. It has since been replaced by the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (**Quality Code**).

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

**academic standards** The standards set and maintained by higher education providers for their courses and expected for their awards. See also **threshold academic standards**.

**awarding body** A UK higher education provider (typically a university) with the authority to award academic qualifications located on the **framework for higher education qualifications**, such as diplomas or degrees.

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

**Code of practice** *The Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education*, published by QAA: a set of interrelated documents giving guidance for higher education institutions which formed the core element of the **Academic Infrastructure** (now superseded by the **Quality Code**).

**designated body** An organisation that has been formally appointed or recognised to perform a particular function. QAA has been recognised by UKBA as a designated body for the purpose of providing educational oversight.

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

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

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

**framework 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*.

**highly trusted sponsor** An education provider that the UK government trusts to admit migrant students from overseas, according to Tier 4 of the UK Border Agency's points-based

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<sup>4</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx)

immigration system. Higher education providers wishing to obtain this status must undergo a successful review by QAA.

**learning opportunities** The provision made for students' learning, including planned study, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, resources, and specialist facilities (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.

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

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

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

**provider** A UK degree-awarding body or any other organisation that offers courses of higher education on behalf of a separate **awarding body** or **organisation**. In the context of REO, the term means an independent college.

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

**Quality Code** Short term for the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which is being developed from 2011 to replace the **Academic Infrastructure** and will incorporate all its key elements along with additional topics and overarching themes.

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

**quality** See **academic quality**.

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

**threshold academic standards** The minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for an academic award. Threshold academic standards are set out in the national qualifications frameworks and **subject benchmark statements**. See also **academic standards**.

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

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